"THE HUNT-2"

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"THE HUNT-2"

by EvilAdmin

Summary

This story picks up where "THE HUNT" left off.

Will finds himself kidnapped and put back in the Hunt once again with Hannibal Lecter, but there's another group of predators who have found out about the Hunt and they want to play too. Hannibal and Will will have to join forces in order to survive this new group of hunters, but can they survive each other?

Notes

After I wrote "THE HUNT" I never imagined I would be writing a sequel. This story is dedicated to those of you who asked for it and inspired me to write this sequel. You know who you are.

Chapter 1

The story of the Hunt made news headlines worldwide. It was one of those stories that was stranger than fiction and just so unbelievable that people couldn't get enough of it. It was rehashed over and over on TV newscasts and talk shows, in newspapers and on the internet. *Tattlecrime.com* tripled its readership during this time. Then when it subsequently came out that one of the hunters, Hannibal Lecter, psychiatrist and well-respected member of the Baltimore community, was the Chesapeake Ripper, the media went into a feeding frenzy.

All four of the surviving participants were bombarded with offers of interviews, book deals, TV show appearances, and this was a nightmare for Will Graham. It was bad enough he had Freddie Lounds hounding him trying to persuade him to grant her an interview based on their past "friendship," but twice now at home he'd woken up to find television cameras set up on his lawn waiting for him to come out. He'd had to call the local sheriff's office to have the trespassers removed. The same thing would happen outside the FBI building where he worked. He'd arrive and leave the building only to find newscasters shoving microphones in his face and shouting out questions. This in combination with the unwanted but vivid erotic dreams he was having nightly now of him and Hannibal back in the jungle was shredding every last nerve he had. He didn't have control of his life during the day or at night, and it was driving him crazy.

Beverly, on the other hand, seemed to be taking it all in stride. She had granted a couple of interviews and done a couple of TV spots and she had been terrific. She was so poised.

The New York cop, who Will now knew was Carlos Manoso, aka 'Striker,' from Brooklyn, was a favorite among the media. Striker was 5' 11", built like a brick shithouse, had skin the color of caramel, dark brown eyes with a mischievous gleam, and big dimples that appeared every time he smiled, and he smiled a lot. He had been on a couple of TV talk shows and had charmed the audience with tales from the Hunt, although the editors certainly had to bleep out a few words from time to time. It was also clear from his depictions whenever he talked about Beverly that he was smitten. When they had both ended up on the *Oprah* show together (clearly Oprah's people picking up on Striker's infatuation), Beverly had been both flustered and flattered in turn as Striker praised her and kept finding reasons to touch her. After that Will knew that Bev would occasionally talk to Striker on the phone, and Will could always tell when that happened because she would be wearing this little smile the rest of the day.

The fourth survivor, the triathlon contender, Calvin Cooper, however, was another story altogether. He was milking his experience for all it was worth. With every interview or TV appearance his stories got more and more outlandish. He was now telling tales of how he rescued his fellow participants, risking his own neck in life and death struggles where he prevailed, only to sadly find out later they had been killed when parted from his company. It would be funny if it weren't so ridiculous. Will had also heard he had a book deal and a possible movie deal in the works.

Will just wanted the whole thing to blow over and his life to go back to normal.

In the meantime, every checkpoint going in and out of the U.S. was on red alert while the police and FBI pulled out all stops trying to find the hunters. They had to be out there somewhere.

* * *

Cuban Military Base

Capitán Juarez watched and read everything he could on the Hunt as news reports exploded worldwide. It was just an amazing story. What was also amazing was the fact that the capitán knew exactly where the Hunt had taken place.

Eleven months ago the capitán was put in charge of a small military base whose main mission was to scan the surrounding waters and islands looking for suspicious activity. This could be an enemy country trying to set up a surveillance or weapons site on one of the many islands, or it could be a drug cartel either trafficking drugs or trying to set up a way station on one of the islands. Cuba had distinguished itself as a tough place to traffic drugs. This was pretty funny actually considering the biggest drug kingpin in the area was Capitán Juarez himself.

Capitán Juarez had risen to the rank of captain faster than anyone in Cuban history. At the age of 28 he was also the youngest. During his impressive career he had distinguished himself by accomplishing whatever tasks his commanding officers had given him in an expeditious manner. It made him a favorite among them. After all, getting the job done quickly and efficiently made them look good as well. He was handsome, brilliant, charming, and effective. No one in the military ever guessed that he was a psychopath and a sadist. Hell, he had passed all his screening tests with flying colors.

After he had risen to the rank of capitán and received his own post, he gradually started transferring out his immediate staff and replacing them with his own handpicked staff. If a staff member fought a transfer, some crime was discovered about them and they were imprisoned, or perhaps a family member was in an inexplicable accident.

After 10 months of switching out staff members one by one to avoid suspicion, his entire inner circle now consisted entirely of handpicked men. They were also part of his drug cartel, the largest and most profitable cartel within a 500 mile radius. One of the reasons his cartel was so successful was that he was in a position where he could watch out for competitors trying to set up way stations on nearby islands or send out drop boats. His people, with the finest military equipment now at their disposal, would spot them and dispatch them in quick order. By dispatch I mean kill. They would disappear without a trace. This had potential upstarts thinking twice about encroaching upon his territory. No, Capitán Juarez had a monopoly on the drug trade in the area, and only his men knew who and what he truly was.

So it benefited Capitán Juarez greatly to have his people doing constant sweeps of the area, including all the local islands. This was typically a pretty boring task but a necessary one. However, on March 15th one of his lieutenants, Lieutenant Castillo, had seen heat signatures signifying activity on one of the small islands, an island rock barely 64 kilometers in diameter. He pulled up information on the island and saw that it had been purchased six

years ago by a Benjamin Raspail, a Cuban businessman who supposedly bought the island to use for business retreats and do team building exercises. No doubt that was the reason for the activity.

Lieutenant Castillo kept tabs on the little island over the next couple of weeks and logged his report as the heat signatures increased. He still didn't think anything about it until he did a routine zoom on the island on June 2nd, and what he saw had him blinking. He zoomed in on several areas of the island and saw the same thing: panicked people running through the jungle with others chasing them. This did not look like any team building he'd ever seen. Then he froze when he spotted one of the pursuers catch up with the person they were chasing and throw them to the ground and start strangling them. Lieutenant Chavez made sure the footage was being recorded. This was just unbelievable.

At this point he called Capitán Juarez over and showed him what he was seeing. After zooming in and examining several scenes showing similar scenes of pursuit, capture, struggle, murder, Capitán Juarez decided these did not look like Cuban citizens, it looked like a bunch of Americans killing each other. Since it didn't involve his own countrymen nor drug trafficking he didn't have a problem with it, so he spent the next few hours with Lieutenant Castillo and the rest of his inner circle in the surveillance room watching the satellite feed from the island. There were quite a number of deaths and it was fascinating to watch. The following day the same thing happened, although with less people. And then after that…nothing. Whatever this was had stopped as quickly as it started.

Ah, but then the news stories exploded worldwide about the Hunt, and Capitán Juarez knew exactly what he had just witnessed. The stories also mentioned that this Hunt was an annual event and the survivors had no idea where it had taken place. The FBI was asking for the public's help on any information regarding the possible location of the island. Capitán Juarez smiled. Yes, he had no problem if a bunch of Americans wanted to kill each other; the less Americans in the world the better. He would keep tabs on this little island and if he saw activity there again next year, maybe he and his men would join in.

So he took the report from Lieutenant Castillo and filed it away for future reference and told his men this was top secret information. They knew better than to talk. Anyone found talking not only ended up dead, so did their family.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> Thanks for your wonderful comments. You guys are the best. This chapter will move things along, so enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will no longer had the Chesapeake Ripper's kills to contend with now that the Ripper had gone into hiding; however, while he had been on the island another killer had surfaced, *The Red Dragon*. The only good thing about the Dragon was he diverted some of the public and the media attention off the Hunt with his brutal killing of families. It made little difference though as Jack put Will on the task of figuring out who the Dragon was as soon as his three-week leave was up which then continued to keep him in the media's cross-hairs. *The Red Dragon* seemed to be killing on a monthly basis and in such a gruesome fashion that after a few months the public's fascination of the Hunt was finally upstaged by the brutality of the Dragon. The FBI didn't have any leads as to *The Red Dragon's* identity and Jack was applying increasing pressure on Will to come up with something. Finally, before the fourth killing cycle Will made the connection, a film processing lab that developed the families' home videos, and *The Red Dragon* was located and killed in a bloody showdown.

After that, though, Will had less to occupy his mind. It was right around the six month mark since the Hunt and Will was growing increasing nervous about Hannibal Lecter's silence. In addition, Will was worried about the next Hunt. Mr. Smith had mentioned that the Hunt was annual, so if management decided to hold another Hunt Will was concerned that even now management might be out there scouting potential participants. So as the months ticked by Will grew more and more anxious. He was unnerved by Hannibal's continued silence. What was he up to? What was he planning? Did it again involve the Hunt? If he was coming for him, why didn't he just come? Will stayed in a constant state of anxiety and frustration.

In April the FBI sent out wires to all law enforcement agencies asking them to notify the FBI of any strange disappearances during the next three months. The FBI still had no clue who was behind the Hunt or where it had been held. In May the FBI assigned two-person surveillance teams to keep an eye on Beverly and Will, just in case. As it turned out, it didn't matter.

* * *

May 1st – Salzburg, Austria

Hannibal Lecter finished work for the day and headed home. He was currently working as the curator of a small museum in the city of Salzburg, also known as the Golden City of High Baroque. He was hardly recognizable these days with his black hair and matching black

beard (which helped conceal his distinctive cheekbones and mouth) and round, gold wire-framed glasses. After the worldwide media blitz when Will, Beverly and the two other survivors had reappeared at the exact location they had been taken from, there was nowhere he could go where he would not be recognized. He knew management promised the participants if they survived the Hunt they would be freed, but he hadn't actually believed it. So after the inept island doctor had patched him up and given him painkillers, he had immediately dyed his hair and donned a fake beard and glasses (he already had a passport with this exact look) and gotten on a plane bound for France. He always carried a couple of extra passports, disposal phones, and money wherever he went just in case. He had called Chiyoh and arranged to have her meet the plane, and then she had driven him to Switzerland where he sought medical help for a "ski injury." After a few months there his own beard had grown in nicely and he picked the smaller European town of Salzburg to start the next chapter of his life.

His picture, along with Abel Gideon and sketches of the other hunters presumed to still be alive, had been in the media for months. Every time it looked like the story was finally dying down there would be a resurgence, mainly being caused by that one survivor who was cashing in on the experience and now looked to have an upcoming book and movie deal. Hannibal had no idea how this man had even managed to survive the Hunt, but he would love to have him over for dinner. His ceaselessly wagging tongue would be the main course.

All the hunters' pictures were also featured on the main page of the FBI's most wanted list. In addition, the world also now knew that he was the Chesapeake Ripper and a cannibal. The additional sensationalized scandal on that had been featured alongside the Hunt story on *Tattlecrime.com* for months, not to mention Freddie Lounds interviewing everyone he had ever had over for one of his dinner parties and their reactions to the news that he had most likely fed them people. Oh, but she was naughty.

After his knee had healed properly he had wanted to go back to the United States and pay Will Graham a visit, but things were just too hot. He couldn't risk capture. So he had had to bide his time. However, when he got home on May 1st he checked *Tattlecrime.com* and was surprised to find the Hunt was indeed on for this year. With all the hoopla he hadn't know whether management would risk it, but when he checked the "Personals" section he found the ad with the word 'hunt' in the title: *"Hunt no further, you found me."* Hannibal knew that some of the remaining hunters would be a bit spooked as a result of what happened last year, especially after being identified, but Hannibal just considered it even more of a challenge, albeit an inconvenient one. He had promised Will Graham that he would see him again, and Hannibal always kept his promises.

He filled out his entry for the Hunt and added Will's name at the bottom where they again had the option of entering a participant. Yes, none of the participants should have made it off the island alive. Management had erred drastically with that. If Will had been alive at the end Hannibal should have been given the option of having him placed in his care. After all, he paid to have him entered. Hannibal would have enjoyed trying some rather unorthodox treatment and reprogramming on Will. He would have enjoyed that *very* much. What had management been thinking?

* * *

May 10th – Muskrat Farm

What had he been thinking? Mason Verger was in his private wing checking the Hunt entry numbers. The numbers were definitely going to be down this year. Even some of the killers who were waitlisted last year weren't signing up even though there was plenty of space this year due to the death of so many hunters at the last Hunt. Mason had to admit to himself that he had made a monumental error in letting the four surviving participants go free, but it had seemed like a good idea at the time if only to teach the hunters that they needed to do a thorough job. However, it had ended up blowing up in his face.

The pictures of the surviving hunters (and a few that hadn't survived) had been plastered all over the news for months. He had been worried that if any of the hunters had been caught they might spill their guts. Oh, they had no idea that he was involved, but they could give the FBI the general location of the island. Well, nobody had been caught and Mason decided to hold the Hunt as usual. He had enough entries to break even at least. This was a hobby, after all.

He was happy to see that not only had his favorite hunter, Hannibal Lecter, signed up this year, he had also entered Will Graham again. Mason was hardly surprised by that. In fact, that was one of the things he was most looking forward to. No, Mason needed to fix his lapse in judgement from last year. He was going to bring back the other three survivors himself, and at the end of the Hunt this year there would be no participants left alive, no matter what. No, Mason never made the same mistake twice.

* * *

May 14th – Cuban Military Base

Lieutenant Castillo was checking the satellite sweep of the surrounding area as per usual looking for any signs of spy activity or drug trafficking when he once again came upon the little island that had been inactive for the last 11 months. He saw activity starting up on it again. Just a few heat signatures, but this may signal that that the Hunt that made headlines all over the world the previous year was going to start up again. He knew Capitán Juarez wanted to hear of any activity on the island immediately, so he excitedly called the capitán over.

Capitán Juarez studied the screen and looked thoughtful. If the Hunt followed the same schedule as last year everyone would be in place on June 1st and the Hunt would start June 2nd. He and the 15 men in his inner circle would be ready. They would go over to the island and join this Hunt, and they would show these Americans what a truly superior predator was. He especially wanted to come face to face with Hannibal Lecter. He was hoping he was once again among the hunters. Capitán Juarez had heard and read so much about him. It was so rare to find a truly worthy opponent. Capitán Juarez told Lieutenant Castillo to keep an eye on the island and report any increase in activity. He had plans to put into motion.

* * *

May 15th - Wolf Trap, Virginia

Will Graham had his fishing gear and was walking over to the nearby lake to fish. His dogs were excitedly running around checking everything out. Will knew there were two FBI agents parked in his driveway keeping an eye on him, but he didn't care. It was Saturday and he needed to get out of the house and get the peace of mind that only fishing gave him these days. He was smiling as he watched the dogs frolic around him, and then he felt a familiar sting on his left shoulder. *No, oh no, this couldn't be happening to him again*, he thought panicking, and then his mind went blank. Will wouldn't know it, but Alana would come over later with her dog Applesauce to check up on him and find the two agents dead, shot through the car windshield. As she phoned Jack on her cell and looked around the grounds she found Will's dogs roaming around anxious and confused. Two of the dogs had tranq darts sticking out of their fur and little Buster was limping, but they were all basically okay. Alana took them into her care once again.

* * *

May 17th - The Island

Will opened his eyes slowly. They felt heavy and gritty. He rubbed them and tried to clear his vision. He couldn't remember having that damn erotic jungle dream about Hannibal last night, which was good. Had he actually gotten a good night's sleep for a change? He looked to the side to check his clock to see what time it was while trying to remember what day of the week it was. If it was Saturday maybe he could just lay here a while longer. However, there was no clock. Adrenalin slammed into his body. "Oh, you have got to be fucking kidding me!" he shouted out loud as he realized where he was. He flopped back down and put his arm over his eyes. He already knew the drill. *You are so dead, Hannibal Lecter*, he fumed.

* * *

June 1st – The Island

Will was taken to the showers and saw his own khakis, t-shirt and burgundy, brown and beige flannel shirt on the counter, not the black pants and t-shirt. He knew this meant it was time. He would come face to face with the hunters tonight, and he would bet every dollar he had that Hannibal Lecter would be there. He showered and dressed and his guards took him down the hallway to the heavy double doors, and through them. Then he heard, "Will!" yelled out and he stopped dead in his tracks. Bev was here too? What was she doing here? He was taken to a cage on the opposite side of her. His heart sank. Bev shouldn't be here, this was wrong. He started scanning the cages and spotted Striker about five cages down from Bev, and then there was that annoying Calvin Cooper a few cages down from him. They had brought them all back. All the ones that survived, they brought them back. It didn't matter if they survived or not, they were never going to let them go, not really.

Then Mr. Smith got on stage and did his little speech for all the newcomers there. There was the sound of shock and outrage from the newcomers that Will himself remembered. Will had heard it all before, he knew the spiel. When the other set of doors opened and the hunters came in, he immediately searched for Hannibal. He didn't spot him at first, thought that perhaps he was wrong after all, but then he noticed a figure with a certain aristocratic bearing that could only be Hannibal despite the dark hair and beard. There he was, the man that had

been haunting his dreams for the last year now. He remembered the line from his dream, “If we can’t be together, we’ll end up tearing each other apart.” He supposed the tearing apart would start tomorrow. He was furious, he couldn’t wait.

Looking at the hunters Will could see there were less of them. Considering they’d killed so many of them last year he wasn’t surprised, he thought with slight satisfaction. That also explained why some of the cages were empty if they were keeping the same 1:1 ratio. He didn’t see Abel Gideon among the hunters this year, but he did see a few familiar faces.

Mr. Smith was just starting to do his welcome speech for the hunters when all of a sudden the doors the hunters had just come through burst open and a troop of military men in khaki green uniforms holding semi-automatic weapons entered the room, quickly circling it. It was so unexpected that the Sardinian guards were caught off guard. Only one of the Sardinians turned his gun toward them and was immediately gunned down, throwing the room into chaos. Many of the participants were screaming, the hunters were scrambling, the guards were dropping their guns and trying to leave the room through the kitchen, but this troop was well trained and had quickly stationed themselves around the perimeter, blocking off all exits. Then a tall man in uniform with brass buttons and green and red epaulettes entered the room and looked around. He was a young man, maybe Will’s own age, good looking, and appeared to be the leader. Will was pretty sure the uniform was Cuban. Will noticed the man didn’t seem surprised by what he was seeing, like he had been expecting to see people in cages in a big ballroom. Interesting.

“Good evening, everyone. My name is Capitán Juarez, and my men and I will be joining your Hunt this year.”

Chapter End Notes

In tomorrow's chapter first blood is spilled, but the question is whose blood is spilled and who's doing the spilling. Look for another chapter tomorrow night around the same time.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

In this chapter first blood is spilled, but whose is it, and who's doing the spilling?

"Good evening, everyone. My name is Capitán Juarez and my men and I will be joining your Hunt this year."

That brought a lot of confused looks.

"Excuse me, sir," Mr. Smith said, "but how did you find out about the Hunt?"

Good question, Will thought, considering the FBI had been trying all year and had come up with nothing.

"The Cuban military monitors all nearby activity, checking for spy activity and drug trafficking. We spotted activity on this island last year without knowing what it was. Of course after all the news coverage we quickly realized what it was we had actually seen."

So at least I know we're somewhere close to Cuba. That's more than I knew last year, Will thought.

"Put everyone in cages," Capitán Juarez commanded, and his men rounded up the hunters and Sardinian guards and put them in cages, filling the empty cages first. Then the captain motioned for Mr. Smith to come down off the stage and join him.

Mr. Smith was trembling and sweating now, not his usual arrogant self.

"So," Capitán Juarez said pleasantly to Mr. Smith, "what usually happens now?"

"Now? Well now the hunters usually sit down and have hors d'oeuvres and champagne while we introduce the participants. Then after that the hunters have 20 minutes to walk around and examine the participants, and then we serve dinner."

"Hmm, very nice. I like this idea. Please proceed."

Mr. Smith looked a bit flustered. "You have my cameraman behind bars, sir."

"That's all right, we don't need him. You can just take me from cage to cage and tell me about them. You have your notes, no?"

"Yes," Mr. Smith said, pulling cue cards out of his pocket.

As Mr. Smith took the capitán from cage to cage introducing the participants, Capitán Juarez showed only mind curiosity. However, when they came to each of the four survivor's cages he studied each one intently, nodding his head as Mr. Smith read off their profiles. When they came to the end of the participants, he walked to the cages containing the hunters and Sardinian guards and looked them over. He gave special attention to Hannibal Lecter who gazed calmly back at him. He motioned one of his guards over, the one who now had the keys to the cages, and said, "I want the following people released from their cage." He then walked around and pointed at Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Beverly Katz, Carlos Manoso, and Calvin Cooper. The five were brought to him in the center of the room.

"So," he said in a smooth voice to Will, Bev, Striker and Calvin, "you are the four who survived the Hunt." He looked them over curiously. "I saw the news reports and read all the articles. It's simply amazing that you four survived against such odds. Especially you," he said, pointing at Will. You don't even look FBI," he said looking him up and down, "much less able to survive such as he," he said pointing at Hannibal. "I understand that you broke this man's knee and tried to strangle him." Capitán Juarez looked at Will with a puzzled look on his face. "How can this be? You're a consultant for the FBI and a teacher, yes? You look more like a frightened little rabbit to me. How is it that you managed to overcome one of the most sought-after killers in your country?"

Will was currently starring at the capitán's knees and since it appeared he expected an answer Will said, not meeting the capitán's eyes, "I just got lucky. He was fighting with another killer when I damaged his knee. He was distracted and I took advantage."

Capitán Juarez was nodding his head. "And the strangling afterwards?"

Will hesitated. There was no way he was telling this man the truth. "He's one of the FBI's most wanted. I felt it was my duty to try to stop him after he was wounded. Obviously I failed." Will didn't elaborate further.

Capitán Juarez was still staring at this little rabbit who wouldn't even meet his eyes. He took two fingers and put them under Will's chin and raised his face until Will was looking right at him with those blue-green eyes of his. The capitán drew in a breath and Hannibal stiffened slightly at the sound.

Out of the corner of his eye the capitán noticed Hannibal stiffen right after he touched the rabbit. It was very slight but was clearly a predator's response to encroachment on their perceived territory. Considering the rabbit had broken his knee and tried to strangle him at their last encounter, the rabbit obviously felt differently. This was growing more interesting by the second. He stored this information away for further examination later. To Will he just said, "You're very hard to read, little rabbit. I'm usually good at reading people." Will just blushed slightly at the close scrutiny and went back to staring at the capitán's knees.

The capitán went to Striker next. "I saw your interviews. They were most amusing. It seems you have a fondness for this one," he said going over to Bev. He circled around her looking her up and down and brought one hand up and stroked her hair while watching Striker. Striker stiffened and Capitán Juarez smiled. "She's beautiful, no?" he said while still stroking her hair. Bev looked over at Striker and gave an almost imperceptible head shake. "I also read somewhere you are part Cuban?"

“That’s right.”

“Your mother was Cuban, yes?”

Striker nodded.

“So you are a half breed, yes? A mutt. Your mother spread her legs for some American dog and spewed you from her traitorous body.”

Striker looked up at the capitán with a tight smile on his face and said, “Well apparently she found the Cuban men of her acquaintance lacking in the balls department.”

Capitán Juarez froze for just a second and a flash of rage crossed his face and then disappeared as quickly as it had come. He then smiled and nodded his head. You are a clever one. I think I will save you for the end and try something on you I have been wanting to try for a very long time. It is called a “pink sock.” Have you heard of this? No?”

Will saw Hannibal, who was standing next to him, stiffen slightly and lean forward, giving the capitán his undivided attention. Whatever this pink sock was Hannibal had heard of it. Pink sock. It didn’t sound bad. What the hell was it?

“For the pink sock you must incapacitate the person so you can work your hand into the anal cavity. As you work the hand in you feel for the large intestines, and when you find them you get a firm grip on them and you remove your arm swiftly. You must be sure to keep pulling until you feel something rip, then pull a bit more. Although your intestines will then be hanging out of your anal cavity looking like a pink sock, death actually comes from internal hemorrhage and can take quite a while I understand. I hear it is agonizingly painful. By the time death finally comes you will welcome it with open arms.”

The room had gone so quiet you could hear a pin drop. So that was a pink sock, Will thought. Ho-ly shit. Now he knew why Hannibal had looked so interested, he knew what it was. These two were made for each other.

To Striker’s credit he didn’t react, although Bev visibly blanched. Capitán Juarez moved on with a smile. He stopped in front of Calvin Cooper next. “I have seen many, many stories about you. Your stories of bravery and courage, rescuing your fellow captives were most impressive. I admire you very much,” Capitán Juarez said in a complimentary voice.

Calvin Cooper smiled, looking flattered, but Will’s inner alarm had just started flashing a warning signal. Will studied the captain closely for the first time, now that the captain was distracted, and opened his empathy up just a bit. What he felt almost made him sick. Whatever he was playing at with Calvin Cooper was not going to end well.

“Perhaps you could give us a demonstration of your fighting skills. I would be honored to see it,” said Capitán Juarez, still using that awestruck voice. “Would you perhaps give us a demonstration with one of my men?”

Calvin looked suddenly uncertain. Clearly he was flattered by the capitán’s praise but was trying to figure out a way to turn him down graciously.

“Just a small demonstration. Look, I will choose one of my less imposing men. Lieutenant Rojas,” the capitán called out, motioning to one of his men who was about 5’ 9”, 170 pounds, more wiry than muscly.

“Well, if you insist,” said Calvin. Calvin was about 6’ 1” looked to weigh 200 pounds. He was a triathlete and Will recalled he had some boxing training, so clearly he was thinking he had the advantage.

Capitán Juarez had his men move some of the tables out of the way so that there was a large clear area in the middle of the room. Then he said, “Well, go ahead, proceed. Show us your fighting skills.”

Calvin had his fists raised as he and his opponent started circling each other, but after only a few seconds the capitán said, “Oh, just one more thing to make it more interesting.” Then he handed his man and Calvin each a large serrated hunting knife about 12” long. “Okay, please continue.”

Calvin looked pale and panicked now. Will felt sick to his stomach. He knew how this was going to end. Lieutenant Rojas was grinning from ear to ear while Calvin looked like he was searching for an opening to run. The circle was enclosed by the capitán’s men though and there was no place to run. His men were starting to root their man on while taunting poor Calvin, and he was looking more panicked by the second.

Lieutenant Rojas started off small, striking like a snake and making small slices across Calvin’s body. Nothing life threatening at first, but clearly painful and drawing blood. First an arm, then across the chest, then the back of the thigh, and on and on it went. But then the cuts got progressively longer and deeper. Calvin would occasionally throw his knife arm out, but never made contact. Calvin was panicking and starting to blubber, starting to plead. It was painful to watch.

Will was furious. He never could understand this type of cruelty for cruelty’s sake. His body started trembling slightly and his hands balled into fists. He was staring at Calvin’s opponent, concentrating on him, opening himself up.

Hannibal looked over at Will and knew in an instant what he was doing. “Will,” he whispered, “don’t. Will, stop it right now.”

But Will was beyond the point of turning back. The pendulum had swung and he was now in sync with Lieutenant Rojas, feeling what he was feeling, knowing what he knew. Will waited till the man’s back was to him and charged.

Capitán Juarez’s guards, although stunned for a second, brought up their guns, but Capitán Juarez raised his hand quickly to stop them. What did this little FBI rabbit think he was doing? This should be interesting. If his man killed the rabbit as well, there were still plenty of people to kill tomorrow. He would let it play out.

When Will got within five feet of Lieutenant Rojas he leapt in the air while clasping his hands and raising them up, and on his way down used the double downward force of his body descending and bringing his arms down to slam his joined hands into the neck area of

Lieutenant Rojas. Lieutenant Rojas went down face first hard, his knife skittering across the floor upon impact. However, Calvin's knife was lying just two feet away from Will, and Will grabbed it and sat down on the man's back and with both hands on the hilt drove the blade through the back of Lieutenant Rojas' neck so hard you could heard the thunk as it slammed into the floor. Lieutenant Rojas was literally pinned to the floor now while making gurgling sounds and thrashing around.

Capitán Juarez had moved around to get a better view of Will's face. He was actually kneeling down so he could see his face clearly.

After Will had driven the knife through Lieutenant Rojas' neck he seemed to become aware that someone was watching him. He looked up and saw Capitán Juarez and smiled that feral smile he had when he was empathizing with a killer. While keeping eye contact he pulled the knife out of Lieutenant Rojas' neck, grabbed him by his hair, pulled his head back and sliced his throat, never losing eye contact with Capitán Juarez. Since Lieutenant Rojas was still alive when Will slit his throat, blood sprayed from his jugular. The blood was mostly spraying toward the floor, but Will still got quite a bit on him. He was still smiling.

Hannibal was watching Capitán Juarez watching Will. The emotions that crossed the capitán's face started out with mild interest, the anticipation of watching Will die, then surprise, curiosity, wonder and excitement. Then Hannibal saw Will's head droop forward and knew he was coming out of it now that the man he was empathizing with was dead.

Capitán Juarez continued to watch the rabbit closely and now saw confusion and vulnerability cross his beautiful face. When the rabbit looked up at him, he looked startled.

Will got up and saw the blood on his clothes and the body below him. He then looked over at Calvin Cooper, who had bled out on the floor from the numerous cuts. He had been too late to save him.

Capitán Juarez stood up too and started to move toward Will as Will backed away.

"So," he said with fascination, "the little rabbit hides a viper. Now it begins to make sense," he said looking over at Hannibal.

Hannibal was watching Capitán Juarez's expression with increasing alarm. He had watched the gamut of emotions that had crossed the Capitán's face, and those emotions had now ended with one Hannibal himself was well acquainted with in regards to Will: Lust. The Capitán's pupils were dilated and he was sporting a pretty obvious tent in his pants. Hannibal knew Will was so beautiful in his confusion, so desirable in his distress. Will was going to end up bent over a table with his pants around his ankles unless Hannibal did something right now.

Hannibal quickly strode toward Will, and once again the guards were confused about what to do because he wasn't heading toward their capitán, not imposing a threat. Hannibal grabbed Will by his arm and spun him around so he faced him and said loudly, "You idiot, are you trying to get us all killed?" and then socked Will in the jaw with his fist. Will dropped to the ground, out cold. "My deepest apologies regarding your man, capitán," Hannibal said.

Capitán Juarez just shrugged his shoulders, clearly not caring about his man, but the look of disappointment regarding Will was clear to Hannibal.

“Put these four back in cages,” he directed his men. “Put these two together,” he said pointing at Hannibal and Will. “I want to see if they’re both still alive in the morning.”

So Will and Hannibal were put back in Will’s cell, and a stunned Striker and Bev were shoved in the cage next to them. Bev had seen Will empathize with killers at crime scenes before but she had no idea that he could become them to this extent.

Calvin Cooper and the dead soldier were left where they were in a pool of blood.

“Now we will have some drinking and dinner,” the capitán announced to the cheers of his men. And they spent the next hour-and-half eating and drinking and throwing insults at the captives. They offered them neither food nor water.

The capitán sipped his champagne and looked around. So many people, so much pain and pleasure to look forward to tomorrow.

Capitán Juarez had told his commanding officer that surveillance had spotted a possible drug outpost on one of the outlying islands and that he and his men were going out to investigate and that it would take a couple of days due to the travel distance. By the end of tomorrow all these people would be dead and he and his men would go back to Cuba and no one would be the wiser. This mysterious management had set this up and Capitán Juarez had snatched it right from underneath their nose.

He then considered the paradox that was Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter. First there was Will Graham, introverted little FBI consultant and teacher who it would seem could flip a switch and become a cold-blooded killer. Then there was the cold-blooded killer and cannibal that just might have some sort of soft spot for the FBI agent that was trying to catch and/or kill him. Oh, he had known immediately what Hannibal was doing when he knocked the rabbit out. He would bet that tomorrow during the Hunt Hannibal would stick to the little rabbit like glue. The question was, what would Capitán Juarez do once he caught the two of them? Oh, the many possibilities ran through his mind and he smiled. One of his own men actually shivered when he saw it.

Chapter 4

After the evening's revelry all but one of the soldiers retired for the night. One soldier was left to watch the captives, just in case. The lights were dimmed and people fell into restless sleep. Will had awoken with a sore jaw and a confused look. Looking at Hannibal he said, "May I ask why you felt the need to punch me in the face?"

"I saved your ass," Hannibal replied calmly.

They both heard Striker snort. "Literally."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Will asked.

Bev said, "Look, Will, the capitán, he was, uh …" She looked at Striker for help.

"Hey, man, he actually did you a favor. That lunatic capitán was coming at you sporting some pretty serious wood until Dr. Lecter decked you. You do not want to be on that man's radar. I still have relatives back in Cuba and there's some fucked up rumors going around about our good Capitán Juarez. For one he's killed people, and if you cross him he makes your whole family disappear. But the worst one I've heard is he likes to pay visits to a certain whorehouse in Cuba that specializes in providing whores for clients with exotic tastes. His tastes seem to run toward boys below the age of consent. It's also said he pays an extra premium because he likes to play rough. Word has it he let one of his little fantasies get out of hand and the boy ended up dead but that he still used the boy even after he died. He apparently gets turned on by pain and death. You're not a boy, Will, but you have this boyish look about you. I'd definitely watch my ass figuratively and literally around him if I were you."

Will looked a little startled at that and looked at Bev and Hannibal for confirmation. Bev nodded and Hannibal shrugged.

* * *

Hannibal and Will sat on opposite sides of the cage facing each other. Neither had spoken for a while. Bev and Striker had laid down to try and get some rest. With no food, no water, and little chance of sleep they were all clearly going to be at a disadvantage in the morning. Will looked up and saw Hannibal watching him with a look of mild curiosity. After the silence between them started getting to Will he asked Hannibal, "So, how's the knee?"

"Oh, I assure you, Will, my knee and every other part of me is functioning perfectly."

Will looked at Hannibal sharply. He's not sure but he thinks he was just innuendoed, but Hannibal's expression hadn't changed. Will sighed. "So after everything that happened last year at the Hunt, you felt the need to enter me in another one. May I ask why? I mean, I'm assuming you're living somewhere in Europe now. We're not even in each other's orbits any longer. Couldn't you have just stayed there and left me alone?"

“I told you in my letter that we would meet again, Will, and I always keep my word.”

“You’re not responsible for Bev and the others being here, are you?”

“No, I suspect that’s management’s attempt at righting a lapse of judgement on their part.”

“You mean letting the four of us live? I’d say we earned it after all we went through.”

Hannibal didn’t reply to that.

“So, what is it you're hoping to gain this time around? I want to make sure I understand. Do you want to kill me? Eat me? Fuck me? I have no idea what your mindset is when it comes to me.”

“In truth, neither do I. My compassion for you is inconvenient, Will. It has me doing things that don’t always make sense where you’re concerned.”

“Compassion? Is that what you call putting me in these Hunts where I’m drugged, kept in a cell for two weeks, then tossed in the jungle and chased around by a bunch of killers? Not to mention you stripping me down and almost … you know. If that’s your idea of compassion I would prefer your indifference.”

“The Hunt last year was part of your becoming, Will. You faced each challenge head on and came out alive. I watched you turn into a predator yourself when you killed Matthew Brown. You enjoyed it, don’t deny it.”

“I didn’t enjoy it, the killer that was in my head that I empathized with enjoyed it. I turned that killer loose to do what needed to be done in order for me to survive. I was merely a passenger along for the ride.” Shit, he had enjoyed killing at the last Hunt, but he wasn’t telling Hannibal that.

“You tell yourself that, but here at this Hunt you’ve already used your empathy to kill. It seems like you’ve found peace with that part of yourself.”

“I won’t deny that I have occasionally found that my empathy comes in useful for more than just profiling for the FBI.”

“You’re coming to accept your gift and embracing it. It’s part of who you are, it always has been. I strongly suspect that you constantly fighting against it was partially to blame for your nightmares. Do you still have nightmares?”

That depends. Is dreaming about you fucking me every night a nightmare?, he thought. But out loud he simply said, “No.”

Hannibal nodded. “You’re accepting it as part of who you are and the nightmares have stopped. Surely even you made that connection.”

Will sighed again. He was tired and he didn’t want to talk about this anymore, especially with Hannibal Lecter’s psychiatrist persona. “I need to try and get some rest. If I lie down you won’t try and kill me in my sleep, will you? I mean, that would be rude, right?”

Hannibal smiled at Will using his own logic against him. “No, I think we can put aside our personal differences for now. We have a much bigger problem to worry about.”

“Yeah, like a capitán who is a psychopath and a sadist. Jesus, how could they put someone like that in charge of a military unit?”

“Worse than that, Will, he’s surrounded himself with similar personalities. His whole unit is pretty much like him. Tomorrow’s hunt is going to be brutal.”

“Isn’t it always?” replied Will sarcastically.

“These men will get more enjoyment from the pain they cause than the killing itself. Their victims will probably beg to die before it’s over.”

“So, I don’t suppose you have any kind of plan," Will asked.

“Just to stay alive as long as I can and take as many of them with me as I can. I think the capitán wants to take me on himself, which is fine. Cut the head off the snake and the body dies. If I can kill him his men might turn tail and run. It might actually be good if you empathized with him right before the Hunt and used it to your advantage.”

“I tried getting into his head while he was distracted and I thought I was going to be sick. His mind is dark and twisted, sharp like the edge of a razor blade, and vile and … Will shuttered.

“Well, maybe one of his men then. They may not be quite as bad.”

Will just shook his head. Being inside the head of the capitán’s man hadn’t been good, but it wasn’t as bad as being inside Capitán Juarez’s head.

“If I don’t have to worry about you killing me in my sleep, I’m going to lie down and try to rest.”

Hannibal just nodded at him. Will took off his blood splattered plaid shirt and rolled it up and made a makeshift pillow and laid on his back stretched out. Since the cages were only about six foot square his feet were next to Hannibal’s seated form.

After about an hour Will finally fell into a fitful dose and he dreamed. It was that erotic jungle dream with him and Hannibal. He was naked and kissing Hannibal. They were grinding up against each other. The kisses were deep and sensuous. Hannibal was touching him, touching him …

Hannibal had fallen into a light sleep sitting up with his back against the bars when Will’s foot bumped him and woke him up. Will was moving restlessly in his sleep. It appeared he was having a nightmare. Hannibal watched him briefly wondering if he should wake him, but as he paid closer attention he saw it didn’t appear to be a nightmare at all. Will was breathing heavy and moving restlessly, but he had his hand on his stomach and it was starting to move under the waistband of his pants. He was arching his back slightly and throwing his head back. Hannibal could see he was getting aroused. How on earth could he be having an

erotic dream under these circumstances? Hannibal looked over at the guard and saw he was dosing at his post. Bev and Striker seemed to be asleep. He moved over beside Will and ran his hand lightly down the front of Will's pants. Will groaned and arched his back. Hannibal looked quickly around to see if anyone had woken up. That was a bit loud. He'd try a different approach. He bent down and gently kissed Will. Will immediately responded with heated enthusiasm. Hannibal deepened the kiss and resisted the urge to climb on top of him. Great, now he was aroused as well. Will's hand was inching further down his pants. Hannibal was torn between wanting to watch Will ease his need and making him stop because of the effect it was having on him. He decided one more kiss and he would wake him. He kissed him again and Will was reaching out to grab him with the hand not sneaking down his pants and gasped, "Hannibal."

Hannibal froze. Will had just said his name, but he was still asleep. Did Will dream about him, dreams that necessitated Will putting his hand down his pants? An interesting development he would clearly have to think about if they made it out of this alive. But for right now he needed to wake Will up before his hand went down his pants any further.

Hannibal lightly shook Will's shoulder while saying, "Will, wake up, you're having a bad dream."

"Hmm?" came the sleepy reply.

"Wake up, Will."

Will came to suddenly then, pulling his hand from his waistband and blushing slightly. "What happened?"

"You were apparently having a nightmare so I woke you," Hannibal replied innocently.

"Oh. Oh, yeah. Thanks." Will then turned on his side away from Hannibal, no doubt trying to hide his erection. Hannibal just smiled while shifting his own pants.

* * *

Mason Verger sat in his private wing enthralled as he watched the remarkable series of events unfolding. It was definitely unexpected, extremely exciting, but also worrisome. Somehow the Cubans had found out the location of the Hunt. Had they told others about it? He had watched the Cubans throughout the evening and they hadn't made any calls back to their home base, which was surprising. Mason had a feeling this was a rogue group of soldiers who had discovered his island and were acting strictly on their own. That made sense considering what they were planning to do. Mason had always had a back-up plan in place as a contingency, and he now picked up the phone and placed a call and put his plan on standby. For now he would watch this exciting development and wait, but if things went south he would initiate *Operation Clean Sweep*.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Hunt

Around daybreak the capitán and his troops came down and released the kitchen staff to make them breakfast. The captives, having spent the evening and night in cages, were clearly uncomfortable, everyone needing to go to the bathroom, as well as hungry, thirsty and anxious.

While the capitán and his men were enjoying their breakfast, one of the now caged killers yelled out, "Hey, what about us? We need some food and water. And, Christ, let us go to the bathroom."

The capitán stood up and walked over to the man's cage with a piece of bacon in his hand. "So, you want food?"

The man nodded.

"You want water?"

"Yeah," the man nodded again.

"No, no, no," Will was saying under his breath. His inner alarm was going off again.

"You want me to let you out so you can go to the bathroom?"

"Yeah, it's been over 12 hours now. My bladder's about to blow."

The capitán pulled out his sidearm and shot the man in the face. There was the pungent smell of urine as the man's bladder emptied out. This was followed by screams and cries, mostly from the new participants.

"Now, who else wants something!?" the capitán yelled out. "Nobody? Good!" Then he went back to the table and finished his breakfast.

After the capitán and his men had eaten and freshened up they came back with their semi-automatic weapons raised.

This was it then.

"Now, we're going to start taking you out a few cages at a time. If any of you gives us any trouble, if you try to escape—not that there's anywhere to go—my men will shoot you in the gut and leave you to die slowly and painfully." They opened the first few cages and started herding people outside. When they got to Will and Hannibal's cage the Capitán looked at Hannibal and said, "I'm looking forward to this very much." Then he looked at Will. "I

have plans for you as well, little rabbit." As the guards opened Striker and Bev's cage next the Capitán said, "I want you to think about what I have in store for you and your girlfriend, half-breed, as you're running through the jungle."

Once they were all outside, 14 guns pointing at them, the capitán told them they would have a 10 minute head start. All the participants, hunters, Sardinians, the kitchen staff who had made their breakfast, everyone was clustered in a group. It looked like the Cubans wanted them all running in the same direction. They weren't trying to disburse them around the island. It would be like shooting monkeys in a barrel. Will joined Bev and Striker but was surprised to see that Hannibal had followed him over.

Will overheard Striker say to Bev, "If we survive this, woman, I want to marry you."

"If we survive this and you can survive meeting my father and six brothers, I'll think about it," she replied.

The sky was overcast with thick black clouds and there was rumbling in the distance. The humidity was 100%. Will wondered if a downpour would help or hinder them. It would definitely hinder the Cubans' visibility and have the added benefit of quenching their thirst.

"Are you actually going to hunt us with weapons?" Striker goaded. "The whole point of the Hunt is to pit hunters and prey against each other on equal footing to see who's really the best."

"Ah," the capitán replied, but we are greatly outnumbered and we need to, how do you say, level the playing field. There are about 50 of you and only 15 of us now that the rabbit killed one of my men yesterday." The capitán looked over at Will while saying this but Will would not meet his eyes. "But don't worry, Mr. Manoso, I have already told my men I want you alive so I can do my little experiment. Maybe I will let your pretty girlfriend watch." The capitán moved closer to Striker and said softly in a conspiratorial voice, "Or maybe I will let my men hold her down and take turns fucking her next to your hemorrhaging body while you watch but are helpless to do anything about it, hmm?"

Will swallowed bile.

Striker just smiled a tight smile.

"Now," the capitán said, "go! Ten minutes."

Off they all ran so tightly clustered they were being constantly jostled by the bodies of people running next to them.

"We have to separate from the pack," Hannibal said as soon as they were out of sight of the clearing.

They split off from the pack and then Striker said, "Look, I'm sure we'll all feel a lot better if we can just take a quick bathroom break." The three guys quickly found a tree and Bev went behind a bushy plant. They all did feel a bit better now, although thirst and hunger were gnawing at them.

“Now,” Striker said to Hannibal, “do you know the way to the closest beachfront? I mean you’ve done this Hunt several times so I’m assuming you know the island pretty well.”

All three looked at Striker.

“Look, did any of you hear a plane yesterday before the Cubans arrived? I didn’t. I’m guessing they came here by boat, a boat that is anchored somewhere out there. Now I don’t know where Cuba is in relation to this island … Do you?” he said to Hannibal.

Hannibal shook his head no.

“Okay, but this is a small island and if we can get to the beach and luck is on our side, maybe we’ll spot it. I believe Will here spent his youth around boats and could probably figure out how to pilot it.”

Will nodded. Yes, this was a good plan. A lot could still go wrong but at least it was a plan. Hannibal pointed and said the closest beach was about seven miles east, and they all started running in that direction.

They didn’t need their watches to know when the Cubans had entered the jungle and caught up to people. The shots and the screaming told them that. The shots were coming from behind them where they had separated from the pack. Will hated thinking it, but if they were lucky and the Cubans concentrated on the clustered people, maybe they would reach the beach with no problem. Five minutes later, however, the rain came. It was a deluge. They could barely see three feet in front of them. Their clothes were plastered to their bodies and their feet were sinking into the now marshy ground with every step and slowing them down. The only good thing was they were able to quench their thirst.

They trekked slowly now hoping they were continuing to go in the right direction with their limited visibility. The shots and screaming had seemed to slow down with the rain as well, so if it was hindering the Cubans, that was good.

At one point Bev came up beside Will and whispered, “So why exactly are we traveling with Hannibal Lecter?”

“Better the devil you know than the one you don’t? If we happen to come up against the capitán or his men, I for one will feel better having an equally cold-blooded killer on our side.”

Bev couldn’t argue with that.

The rain stopped as suddenly as it had started and the sun came out in full force making everything steamy. The marshy ground was still slowing them down but at least Hannibal confirmed they were still headed in the right direction. He estimated another two miles now. They only heard the occasional shot now and again. But maybe that was because the capitán and four of his men were standing right in their path. They stopped, stunned. How the hell had the son of a bitch gotten in front of them?

Chapter End Notes

I hope everyone is enjoying the story so far. Tomorrow Will, Hannibal, Bev and Striker face off with the capitan and his men and more blood will be spilled ... but whose?

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

Now, on with the hunt!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The capitán's men were aiming their guns at them but no one fired. The capitán was smiling. Will, Hannibal, Bev and Striker had no weapons, so all they could do was wait and see what the capitán's next move was going to be.

"Too easy," the capitán said with a sigh. "Take these two back to the building and put them in a cage," he said pointing at Striker and Bev. "We have an experiment to conduct when I get back."

Two of the soldiers headed back to the ballroom with guns trained on Bev and Striker.

"So," he said looking at Hannibal, "here we are as I knew it was ordained to be. You could not escape me for I am the superior predator."

Will actually thought he heard a growl coming from Hannibal at that statement.

"I think, capitán," Hannibal said, "it's time to back up those words. You and me one-on-one, no weapons," Hannibal challenged, clearly throwing down the gauntlet.

The capitán nodded. "Of course, of course, it's what we have both been wanting, no?, to test ourselves against a worthy opponent." The capitán smiled. "But first I wish to try something, and then we will fight. Keep your guns trained on him," he told his men, indicating Hannibal, "and shoot him if he moves." He then turned to Will and put his hand on Will's chest and pushed him backwards until Will's back hit a tree. The capitán looked back at Hannibal with a knowing look on his face. He had been right. When the captives had been turned loose, Hannibal had immediately followed the rabbit and stuck with him, as he knew he would. Hannibal had some sort of attachment to this man and he was going to test the limits of that attachment and see what happened.

Capitán Juarez had Will against the tree at such an angle that he could watch Hannibal out of his peripheral vision. Will had started to struggle, but the capitán pulled out his 12" serrated knife and held it in front of Will's face twisting it slightly so that the sun danced on its razor edge. He put the tip of the knife under Will's chin and Will lifted his chin to avoid the pressure of the tip of the knife. The capitán slowly drew the tip of the knife down Will's throat, leaving a thin red line in its wake. He then took the tip of the knife and put it under the top button of Will's flannel shirt, and with a quick flick cut the button off. He looked over at Hannibal now and Hannibal was just watching, letting no emotions come through.

The capitán flicked off the second button, then the third, and so on until they were all cut off and the flannel shirt parted.

Will was looking at Hannibal, hoping that Hannibal would unleash his inner Ripper and do something, but with two guns trained on him there wasn't much he could do. Hannibal was looking at Will like he was trying to tell him something. In the meantime, the capitán took the hem of Will's t-shirt in one hand and pulled it away from Will's body and brought the knife up underneath the t-shirt to the neckline and started slicing the material downward. He pushed the two pieces of Will's t-shirt aside and touched Will's bare chest. Will's breathing picked up and he was feeling slightly panicked. He was remembering what Striker had said back in the cage about the capitán.

"You have a beautiful body, bare like a child's body," the capitán said in a soft voice while stroking Will's chest. He took the point of the knife and placed it two inches above Will's left nipple, pressed the tip of the knife into the flesh and sliced down through the nipple leaving a bloody trail. He placed his mouth on the bloody nipple and sucked on it hard, causing Will to cry out in pain. The capitán then looked up at Hannibal and slowly licked Will's blood off his lips.

Hannibal was no longer looking at the capitán with no emotions. It was time to drop the person suit and let the Ripper come out and play. He stared at the capitán with a look of murder on his face, and the capitán chuckled and said, "So, finally I get to meet the real you."

While still watching Hannibal, the capitán pressed his body against Will's aggressively with his knife pressed against Will's side to keep him from doing anything, and started kissing his neck.

Then they all startled as they heard the sound of a gun being fired not too far from them.

"It sounds like one of your friends tried to do something brave," the capitán said. "Oh, well, hopefully I'll have one left to play with when I'm done here."

Will was struggling against the capitán and looking over at Hannibal with a desperate look on his face. Hannibal was mouthing something. Will watched his mouth closely; he was mouthing "*empathize*." Will did not want to empathize with this man. He tried to go inside himself to the place where he stored all the profiles of the killers he had empathized with so he could sync with another killer, but he couldn't concentrate with the way the capitán was touching him so intimately. Finally he looked down at the capitán and closed his eyes and let the pendulum swing … (vroosh) … and immediately felt sick and looked up at Hannibal … (vroosh) … while the pendulum was still swinging and closed his eyes again.

Wait, who did he just empathize with?, Hannibal wondered.

Will opened his eyes and looked suddenly calm. He looked over at Hannibal with heavy lidded eyes and smiled while the capitán was rubbing and grinding against him. Will put his head back against the tree and started stroking the capitán's back, never taking his eyes off Hannibal.

The capitán, thinking that Will was surrendering to him, said "Ah, little rabbit, if you please me maybe I will let you live. I will take you back to Cuba with me. Would you like that, little rabbit?" The capitán was fumbling with Will's pants now, ripping the button off in his haste.

The capitán had no intention of letting Will live. He was going to rape him, and then when he was near his climax he would cut the rabbit's throat and find his release as the rabbit died twitching beneath him while Hannibal watched, helpless to stop him. Then he would fight Hannibal while he was consumed in his pain and rage. It would be glorious. Pain always made everything so much sweeter. He was getting hard just thinking about it. *The rabbit has beautiful eyes*, he thought. *Maybe I'll take them as a souvenir when I'm done here to remind me of this wonderful experience.*

The capitán sheathed his knife and Will felt and heard his own zipper go down, and then the capitán was fumbling with his own zipper. Will was still looking at Hannibal with a calm expression like nothing out of the ordinary was going on.

Hannibal, on the other hand, was finding himself unnaturally perturbed that Will seemed to be enjoying being manhandled by that … that … inferior predator. In fact, he was getting angry. Was Will actually going to just let the capitán take him and stare at Hannibal the whole time? The more Hannibal saw, the more furious he was getting. Then the capitán had his thumbs under Will's waistband starting to push his pants down. Will struck so fast that Hannibal and the two guards all jerked, startled. They didn't know what had happened at first.

Will plunged the fingers of his right hand into the capitán's throat meaning to rip out his larynx, but it was tougher than he anticipated and his fingers only penetrated about an inch of skin and muscle. It had looked so easy when fucking Rambo did it on TV. The capitán stumbled back, grasping his throat and coughing, looking to his two men for backup. That's all the distraction Hannibal needed as he grabbed one of the soldiers to use as a shield just as the other shot at him, accidentally killing his comrade. Hannibal grabbed the gun from the dead man's hand and shot the other soldier before letting the body of the first soldier fall. He turned toward the capitán just as he was fumbling to get his gun out of the holster, and shot him in the hand, and then in the leg. The capitán dropped the gun and collapsed to his knees clutching the wound in his leg. Hannibal kicked the gun away but the capitán grabbed his knife from the sheath with his left hand and held it up.

Will walked around to one of the dead soldiers and took his knife, inspecting it slowly. Hannibal, following Will's lead, tossed the gun away and picked up the other dead soldier's knife. Hannibal looked over at Will. "How would you like to do this?" he asked curiously, wondering what Will's current mindset would come up with.

Will considered Hannibal for a moment. He went and stood in front of the capitán, who was still on his knees putting pressure on the bullet wound, and considered him. "I think I'd just like to watch for a while," he said to Hannibal.

All of a sudden the capitán lurched forward, still on his knees, and caught Will on the upper left thigh with the knife. Since it wasn't his dominant hand he only ended up grazing it, but Will hissed and took a step back looking angry at first, but then he smiled and said, "The

pleasure is in the pain, eh, capitán?" Will took several paces backward and took off his flannel shirt and wrapped it tightly around his thigh. He knelt down then so he was eye level with Capitan Juarez and looked up at Hannibal expectantly.

Hannibal smiled, surprised. He looked at the capitán, wondering where to start. He was also conscious that Will still had a 12" knife in his possession. He didn't want to turn his back on Will right now, not when it appeared he might be in sync with the capitán.

Hannibal started off by slicing the biceps in the capitán's left arm. The capitán's left arm fell limp and he could no longer raise the knife. The capitán clumsily tried switching the blade to his damaged right hand, but Hannibal had already swung around and sliced the bicep in the right arm. Now the capitán's arms were hanging at his sides uselessly though he was still loosely gripping the knife. The capitán tried to stand at this point despite his injured leg but Hannibal quickly sliced the hamstrings on his good leg. The capitán dropped like a stone moaning in pain.

Hannibal looked over at Will at this point to gauge his reaction thus far and froze, nearly dropping the knife when he saw Will sliding his hand up and down the front of his pants looking excited as he watched Hannibal work. Hannibal remembered Striker saying that the capitán gets turned on by pain and death. Hannibal's nostrils flared. The smell of blood was in the air, there was a body below him ready to be carved up, and Will Graham was watching the whole thing and getting aroused. This was Hannibal's very own personal wet dream.

Hannibal was trying to concentrate on what he was doing with the capitán but his eyes kept going back to Will and the steadily growing bulge under his hand. Hannibal decided he'd best finish this up quickly. The capitán was on his back now that his hamstring was cut, and Hannibal kicked the knife out of the his damaged hand. By now the only thing still working properly was the capitán's mouth, and he was using that quite a bit spewing insult after insult at both of them in English and in Spanish. Hannibal heard Will call out, "I find his mouth quite rude. Make it stop please." *Hmm*, Hannibal thought, *that sounds more like me.* Hannibal smiled and sat on the capitán's thighs as the capitán cried out in pain, and brought the serrated knife toward the capitán's mouth. Of course the capitán tried to clamp his jaws together, but that doesn't stop a 12" serrated razor sharp hunting knife. Hannibal cut his tongue out, breaking several teeth in the process, and showed it to Will.

Will stared at the tongue and was breathing even harder now and his eyes were heavy lidded and his pupils were dilated as he looked at Hannibal. He still had his hand on the bulge in his pants and his lips were parted.

"Would you like to come over here and finish him off, Will?" Hannibal asked curiously.

Will crawled—*oh, god, he's crawling,* Hannibal thought moaning—over to the capitán. Hannibal got off the capitán's body but stayed kneeling right next to it so he could watch Will closely. Will sat on the capitán's legs and positioned his own knife right below the stomach area on the right side. The capitán was a mess now with his mouth all bloody, his arms bloody and useless, his legs bloody and useless, but he was still trying to twist his body to get away from Will.

Will took the knife tip and slowly pierced the skin under the stomach on the left side, watching as the tip sunk in deeply. He then drew the blade slowly all the way across to the right. The capitán's eyes bulged as his guts spilled out of his body. Will picked up the large intestine as it slid out and examined it. To the capitán he said, "You were going to pull Striker's intestines out of his anal cavity. You were going to kill Bev. *NO ONE HURTS MY FRIENDS!*" he screamed, his face now full of rage, as he plunged the knife through the capitán's right eye. The capitán's body finally relaxed in death.

Will turned toward Hannibal then, who was still kneeling next to him watching him. Will climbed off the capitán and brought the now bloody knife with him. Hannibal stood as well watching Will cautiously, trying to glean what was in Will's mind. In the last few minutes he had seen Will react with what appeared to be Capitan Juarez's persona, Hannibal's own persona, and possibly Will's persona when he became angry about the capitán wanting to hurt his friends. He wasn't sure what Will's mindset was right this minute.

Will stalked toward Hannibal and raised the knife. He said, "Pain makes everything so much sweeter" as he aimed for his heart and brought the knife down as hard as he could. Hannibal grabbed his wrist and tried to twist it to get him to release the knife, but Will grabbed the knife hilt with the other hand as well to add pressure, and Hannibal had to slam his wrists against a tree to get him to drop it. Will then went to grab Hannibal's throat with his bare hands, but Hannibal grabbed his wrists and brought them behind Will's back which resulted in pressing Will up against his body. Hannibal could feel Will was still aroused so he decided to try something. Since Will seemed to have empathized with him at least partially, he held Will's wrists behind his back with one hand and took the other arm and put it around the back of Will's neck to brace him while he brought his lips down on Will's hard.

Will immediately bit Hannibal's lip hard enough to draw blood, and that seemed to freeze Will. Hannibal felt Will swallow, and then Will drew the bleeding lip into his mouth and started sucking. Hannibal went rock hard instantly. Hannibal released Will's wrists and Will immediately wrapped his arms around him and the two of them began kissing for real. Will was kissing him in a way that would make a porn star stand up and applaud. They were both fully aroused and Hannibal was thinking this was too good to be true. If this were last year's Hunt Abel Gideon would be interrupting them right about now. Thank god he wasn't here this year.

"Will?" Bev said behind them.

Well, fuck.

Chapter End Notes

Special shout-outs to:

RomaniaChan and iceheart831who left kudos for Hunt 1 and came right over to Hunt 2 and left kudos. Thanks, guys! Hope you're enjoying the story.

And a big special thanks to MissingOneEye who came up with what could be the perfect theme song for this story. If you're not familiar with "Monsters" by Ruelle, check out this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig0L32drTLk

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal turned his head and saw not only Ms. Katz, but also Mr. Manoso standing there looking a bit shocked and confused. "Will, we have company," Hannibal said in a resigned voice. Hannibal knew he couldn't kill them because of the way Will had gone off on the capitán about hurting his friends just before he plunged a knife in his eye. Will was still trying to kiss him. "Will," Hannibal said, "Ms. Katz and Mr. Manoso are here."

Bev had used her martial arts skills to once again surprise her guard, and Striker had then attacked his guard, barely missing getting a bullet in the head. When Bev and Striker were headed back to Will and Hannibal they had heard Will scream out "NOBODY HURTS MY FRIENDS" and arrived just in time to see Will drive the knife in Capitan Juarez's eye. They had stared at the bloody scene that was Hannibal, the very dead Capitán Juarez with Will sitting atop him, and his equally dead men. Then when they saw Will get up and stalk toward Dr. Lecter with a knife they were confused but didn't want to say anything to distract him in case there was something they were missing.

Striker had whispered to Bev, "Is he doing that weird voodoo thing he does?"

"Maybe," she had replied, "but why is he trying to kill Dr. Lecter now?" Then when the kissing began she said, "I am just so confused right now."

Striker had said, "I think there's more to this story than meets the eye." Striker never told Bev, but he was awake when Will had his dream back in the cage.

"Will, stop," Hannibal tried again, "Ms. Katz and Mr. Manoso are watching."

Will wasn't deterred. "Make them go away," he said. Better yet, let them join us. But I get to have you first."

Hannibal, slightly shocked, looked over and saw an expression of shock on Ms. Katz's face as well, but when he looked over at Mr. Manoso, that was a different story. Striker's eyebrows were raised and he was looking at Bev with speculation.

When Bev looked over at Striker and saw that look, she literally jumped back a step and said, "What! Are you kidding me!" Then with her finger pointing at him for emphasis she said, "No." Then she looked over at Will and Hannibal—especially Hannibal—and said, "Oh, *hell* no. What are you even thinking?"

"Hey, I'm from Brooklyn and a cop. Trust me when I say I've had worse propositions, and stranger ones."

"Well, then I think you need to move."

“I could move in with you,” he offered smiling.

“Okay, since I seem to be the only person here who is not thinking with their dick right now, may I remind everyone that there still may be more of these guys out there looking to shoot or slice and dice our asses. We need to get moving and find that boat.”

Ms. Katz was right. Hannibal needed to get Will to snap out of it. He tried pushing him away, shaking him, blocking him, but he had attached himself to Hannibal like velcro. Finally he tried slapping him across the face to try and snap him out of it. Will looked stunned then, but Hannibal saw the familiar confused look cross his face and knew it had worked. “Will, we have to keep moving and find the boat.”

When Will realized he was clinging to Hannibal he immediately let go, blushing.

They set off across the final two miles to the beach where they would hopefully find the boat.

* * *

Mason Verger had seen enough. The Cuban capitán was dead and Hannibal and three of the participants were trying to get off the island. Mason had already sworn that no participant was leaving the island alive this year, and he definitely didn’t want the Cubans looking any further into who really owned the island, so it was time to initiate *Operation Clean Sweep*. He picked up the phone and gave the go-ahead.

* * *

When Will, Hannibal, Bev and Striker arrived at the beach there was no boat in sight. They decided to split up, Bev and Striker going up the beach, Will and Hannibal going down the beach to see if either spotted a boat around the curve of the heavily jungled island. After each had walked about a mile from the other, Will and Hannibal spotted the boat anchored about 200 yards from the beach. They signaled Bev and Striker to join them.

When Bev and Striker caught up, Striker whistled as he caught sight of the boat. “That, my friends, is a nasty piece of work. It’s an 85 foot Iranian built Zolfaghar class high speed combat boat. It has twin Nasr-1 anti-ship missiles on top, two torpedoes in the small bulges on either side of the cabin, and a machine gun mounted on the bow. It also looks like they’ve reinforced the hull with metal spikes for ramming. This ship is every bit as much a predator as her crew.”

The other three were just looking at Striker as though he’d grown a second head.

“What?” he said. “Didn’t any of you pay attention to my profile when Mr. Smith read it? I was in the military for four years earning enough money to go to the police academy.”

They spotted some rubber rafts pulled up on shore that were tied to trees so they couldn’t wash away when the tide came in. They didn’t see anyone on the deck but they set out in two rafts just in case hoping if one was shot and sunk the other raft still might have a chance of reaching the boat. They had taken guns from the deceased capitán and his men, so at least

they were armed now. However, they made it to the boat without incident. They climbed the rungs on the outside of the boat and after carefully walking around and checking the bridge and below deck there was indeed no one there. The capitán had clearly never expected anyone to make it this far alive. They all went to the boat's cabin where Will examined the control panel.

"Can you drive this thing?," Bev asked.

"I've never piloted a boat like this before, but I've been around boats most of my life and they all have similar basic controls." He then got the engine started and turned the wheel until the compass read north. The United States was north of Cuba, so they would enter U.S. waters eventually if they traveled north.

After about five minutes heading north they heard the sounds of planes. Two small twin propeller airplanes, flying low to go undetected by radar, passed near them heading toward the island.

"Do you suppose the FBI figured out where we are and those are rescue planes!" Bev asked excitedly.

Will stopped the boat and they all watched the planes. But then they stared in horror as the two planes buzzed over the island and released some type of orangey-yellow gas. They could hear the screams all the way out here, and then suddenly everything went deathly still.

"Somebody just annihilated every living thing on that island." Will said in shock. "Was it the Cubans do you think?"

"No," said Hannibal sounding certain. "It was management cleaning up this mess, making sure there are no witnesses to this fiasco."

They all breathed a small sigh of relief when they saw the wind was blowing the gas south and not in their direction. Now they had to hope that the two planes hadn't noticed them. No such luck. One of the planes had circled around and was headed straight for them and the second one wasn't that far behind. If the planes sprayed them with that gas it would be all over.

But suddenly Striker was running up top where the two missile launchers were. Striker grabbed the handle of one, checked the settings and lined it up. The plane was coming closer. Will, Hannibal and Bev were looking between the plane and Striker wondering why he didn't pull the trigger already.

"Shoot for god's sake!," Bev yelled. Finally Striker fired. The plane exploded and the sea was littered with debris. Striker went to the second launcher while the second plane was turning around trying to escape. Once again he carefully lined up his shot and fired. Another direct hit.

"Wow," Bev said, clearly impressed.

“Did I mention I was with Air and Missile Defense? Now you know where I got the nickname Striker,” he said smiling at Bev.

“Why’d you take out the second plane when it was retreating?,” Will asked.

“Because whoever was in that plane was probably trying to call their boss and report that a boatload of survivors was leaving the island. I only hope they didn’t get a chance to call it in. Maybe if we’re lucky management will think the Cubans shot the planes out of the sky.”

They were all looking at Striker with new respect, especially Bev.

Will started the boat back out, heading north in the direction of Florida (he hoped). Striker estimated it would take between 9-12 hours before they hit U.S. waters and where they would be spotted by the Coast Guard in an enemy ship.

Hannibal said he was going to go below deck and look for medical supplies so he could examine Will’s leg where the capitán had cut him and determine the extent of the injury. The blood had soaked through the flannel shirt tied around his leg.

Hannibal found a small office below deck that had a cabinet full of medical supplies. Every combat boat always had basic supplies for emergencies. He pulled out antiseptic and gauze and bandages. Then he pulled out a vial of morphine and antibiotics. Will would need the morphine for the pain and the antibiotics to stave off infection. The morphine would have the added effect of relaxing Will. Hannibal thought about this a minute and then, smiling, decided to give Will a slightly larger than normal dose. He arranged his supplies on a tray, got the syringe ready with the two drugs, and cleared off the desk for Will to sit on. He also found scissors and a razor and decided it was time for the beard to go. After he shaved off his beard he searched the other cabins and found some fruit, candy bars, snacks, and bottled water. He went topside to get Will.

Hannibal found Will on the bridge steering the boat, but he could see he was shifting his weight off his injured leg.

“Come on, Will, I found some medical supplies. Let me take a look at your leg.”

All three of them looked at Hannibal, and then did a double-take. There were those distinctive high cheekbones and wide mouth he’d been hiding behind the beard.

“Coming out of hiding, Dr. Lecter?” Will asked.

“There’s hardly any reason any longer. There’s not exactly anywhere to hide. Now come along and let me take a look at your leg.”

Will looked at Hannibal like he wanted to refuse.

“You do remember I was an ER doctor and a surgeon before I was a psychiatrist, don’t you?”

Bev, noticing Will’s discomfort said, “I could come along if you want.”

Will signed. He was being childish. "No, you and Striker stay here and steer the boat. Just keep the compass pointing north. Then I'll relieve you and you can both get some rest."

Hannibal gave Bev and Striker the food and water he had found. He didn't want them to have any reason to come below deck while he was playing doctor with Will.

Hannibal led Will down to the small office. "Let me give you this injection first. It's a cocktail of morphine for the pain and antibiotics for the infection. Once the morphine kicks in the examination will be much less painful."

Will hated needles but was just glad Hannibal said he could give it to him in his arm. He did not want to drop his drawers in front of this man. But just as he was thinking that Hannibal said, "Let's take the flannel shirt off your leg and then you'll need to remove your pants." *Well, shit*. Will felt uncomfortable as he let his pants fall to his ankles, but at least he still had his boxers on. He stepped out of his pants feeling self-conscious as he hopped up on the edge of the desk. The t-shirt he was wearing was split down the middle by the capitán and Will was holding the two pieces together feeling awkward and nervous.

"Okay, the morphine should have kicked in by now so let's have a look at that. Will, your head is blocking my light. You need to lie back."

Will laid back on his elbows so he could still keep an eye on what the doctor did, but when he did this his t-shirt fell open and he was feeling even more self-conscious. The cut was on the top of Will's left thigh, eight inches long and cut straight down the middle. Dr. Lecter worked quickly and efficiently cleaning the cut. It was still painful but he was grateful Dr. Lecter said he didn't need to stitch it. Fortunately the Cubans had some skin glue and the cut wasn't terribly deep, so he literally glued the skin back together. Hannibal then got the gauze and wrap out. "I need to wrap this all the way around your thigh, Will, so you need to slide back further on the desk and put your foot on the desk to elevate your thigh off the surface so I can wrap it properly."

Will scooted back so that his full body was lying on the desk and he placed his foot on the desk as he was instructed. He was also off his elbows and lying flat looking totally relaxed now. The high morphine dose was working fully now. Hannibal smiled. He had Will right where he wanted him.

Once Will's leg was wrapped Hannibal lifted Will's foot and lowered the leg flat on the desk. Then he grabbed another piece of cotton that he had especially prepared and bent over Will.

"Will immediately tensed. "What are you doing?"

"I'm going to disinfect that nipple next. The capitán had it in his mouth, and you don't know what else he's had in his mouth lately."

"Okay, that's gross. Go ahead."

Hannibal had purposely put 100% straight rubbing alcohol on the cotton. This was going to burn like the devil. He began cleaning the cut and Will hissed and jerked and said, "OW! That burns!" Hannibal bent his head close to the nipple and immediately began blowing on

it. Then he turned his head toward Will and said, “Better?” Their faces were only about 10 inches apart. Will was blushing. “Uh...yeah, better,” he mumbled. Hannibal smiled as he got the skin glue and repaired the nipple, then put bandaging over it.

“How does the leg feel now, Will?”

“’S good.”

“No pain?”

Will just shook his head.

“And the nipple? Any pain?”

Will shook his head again.

“I would like to give you something to remember me by, Will.”

“Well, if it’s a knife in the gut I want to remind you that I’m the only one that knows anything about boats,” Will chuckled, clearly feeling unconcerned.

Hannibal had pulled his rubber gloves off and laid a hand on Will’s uninjured thigh. Will jerked slightly and looked at Hannibal with a slightly confused look.

“Let me ask you a question, Will.”

“Hmm?”

“When you’re lying in your bed at night, what do you dream about?”

Will froze. He couldn’t possibly know that he had those erotic dreams about him, he couldn’t.

Hannibal smiled. He caught the momentary look of stunned guilt cross Will’s face. “Do you dream about me and you back in the jungle when we had that near miss?,” Hannibal asked while stroking Will's thigh with his thumb.

“No.”

“I don’t believe you, Will. In your dreams when we’re together, are you fucking me or am I fucking you? Is it slow and passionate or rough and violent?”

“Are we done here? Can I get up now?” Will was blushing bright red now.

Will started to sit up but Hannibal took his left hand and placed it on Will’s bare chest and pushed him back down on the desk. He also moved his right hand up Will’s thigh onto his groin over his boxers.

Will looked startled as he said, “What the hell are you doing!? Why do you have your hand on my dick!?”

“When’s the last time you were with anyone, Will? When’s the last time anyone has touched you like this? I bet it’s been awhile. Your gift can also be your curse when it comes to connecting with people,” Hannibal said. Hannibal started massaging Will’s groin and Will gasped, but he was looking scared as well. He tried to get up again but his time Hannibal stopped massaging and squeezed Will’s cock painfully with his right hand until Will gasped and laid back down. Hannibal started massaging again.

“Why are you doing this?”

“Because, Will, in a few hours we’ll be picked up by the Coast Guard and I will be handcuffed and put in a cell, and from there I’ll be shuffled from cell to cell until they decide what to do with me. Then I will most likely spend the rest of my life locked up and bored out of my mind. I want a memory to take with me for those boring days, weeks, months and years ahead. Would you deny me this?”

“I’m not going to let you fuck me, if that’s what you’re thinking.”

Hannibal cocked his head. “You were going to let me fuck you last year at the Hunt, if you recall, before Abel Gideon showed up.”

“I had empathized with you, and you know it. I also tried to kill you within the hour.”

“Yes, I do recall that. I can predict when it’s going to rain now by the twinges in my knee. Fortunately what I have in mind doesn’t require you to do anything other than just relax.”

Will tried yet again to get up, and Hannibal squeezed painfully until he lay back down.

Hannibal continued to stroke and massage. Despite himself Will could feel himself starting to stir under Hannibal’s hand. He tried thinking about things that were the opposite of arousing to counteract the feelings like grading papers, going to crime scenes, gutting fish, Jack yelling at him. He couldn’t get a hard-on thinking about Jack yelling at him for Christ’s sake! Still, he could feel his resolve slipping under Hannibal’s skillful hand.

Hannibal was watching Will's internal struggle. Will was fighting it with all he had but the morphine had already weakened his defenses, he just didn’t know it.

Will was breathing harder now and licking his lips. *Jesus this felt good. Shit, no, what was he thinking!* His mind and his body were waging a major battle for control right now.

Will’s body: It has been a long time. About three years now, right? Back at the academy? He’s not asking you to do anything, so just lie back and enjoy it.

Will’s brain: You give him an inch and he’s take a foot.

Will’s body: Anything that feels this fucking good can’t be bad.

Will’s brain: If you give in he’ll own a piece of your soul.

Will’s body: Why don’t you shut the fuck up, brain, and let us have a little fun.

Will's brain: Humph.

So Will's body won this round and Hannibal saw Will grasp the sides of the desk. He was also starting to pant and make little moaning sounds and moving restlessly. Will tried one more last ditch effort, although Hannibal could tell his heart wasn't in it. "If you don't stop now I'm going to call Striker and Bev."

"If you do that I'll kill them. You don't want that on your conscience now, do you?" Will just shook his head and closed his eyes. Now that Will's eyes were closed Hannibal went to stage two. In one swift motion he took the waistband of Will's boxers and pulled the front down placing the band under Will's balls and quickly took Will in his mouth. Will nearly came off the desk and Hannibal had to put both his hands on Will to ground him.

Will once again tried to sit up, but this time he felt teeth in response and laid back down.

Hannibal saw the point when Will accepted the fact that he couldn't get out of this. Hannibal started moving his mouth and tongue. He watched the different looks that crossed Will's face as he varied his technique. When he licked, Will gasped. When he sucked softly, Will moaned and threw his head back. When he sucked hard, Will cried out. When he swirled his tongue on the tip Will arched his back and fisted his hands. Every expression was going straight to Hannibal's memory palace to watch over and over again in the bad times to come.

Hannibal took Will right to the edge and pulled back. There was one more thing he wanted from Will to store in his memory palace before he would let him come. He took Will to the edge, pulled back; took him to the edge, pulled back. Will was coated in sweat, hair plastered to his face, and Hannibal could see the frustration on his face now.

"Hannibal," Will gasped, "please."

"Please what, Will?"

"Please, just let me come," he sobbed.

There it was, what he wanted. Will begging for it so beautifully. Hannibal took him in deep and sucked hard and Will exploded in his mouth, and, god, Will shattered so beautifully. Will cried out so loud he was worried Ms. Katz or Mr. Manoso might have heard, but thankfully they didn't come down. Will had tears leaking from the corners of his eyes and his breathing was ragged. Hannibal closed his eyes and inhaled deeply savoring the smell. He recorded every visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory nuance. Then before Will had a chance to come down from his sex-induced high and get all huffy like Hannibal knew he would, he bent down and kissed him hard, letting Will taste himself on Hannibal's lips. Hannibal left the room with one final glance back, one final picture of the masterpiece sprawled out on the desk looking at him thoroughly satiated through those bedroom eyes. Hannibal had no doubt that Will would remember this for a long time to come, whether he wanted to or not.

Chapter End Notes

FYI, tomorrow's chapter will return to being posted at my regular time in the evening after work.

Chapter 8

When Will finally got his breathing back under control he was embarrassed and furious. Why was Hannibal Lecter always touching him? Why couldn't he stop Hannibal Lecter from touching him? True, Hannibal had had him by the balls so to speak, but he should have been able to do something. He put his pants back on and found a spare t-shirt in one of the rooms and went on deck to relieve Bev and Striker as he had promised.

When Bev got a look at his face she turned on Dr. Lecter. "I thought you said he was okay! He's all flushed. Is he running a fever?" She went over to Will and put her hand on his forehead.

"Oh, he was definitely running a little hot, but I gave him something for that," Hannibal deadpanned, turning his face from Ms. Katz and struggling to keep a smile off his face.

Bev was still frowning but Striker was looking down at the ground rubbing his forehead. That man saw way too much.

However, the way Will was looking at Hannibal right now, if looks could kill not only would he be dead, but he'd look like the wound man about now.

Bev was still looking worried. "Will, if you're not up to this, Striker and I can stay on the bridge while you get some rest.

"No, Will said. "The cool air will do me some good, help me clear my head. You guys go ahead and I'll call you if I need you. Dr. Lecter, you should get some rest as well," Will added pointedly. He did not want Dr. Lecter anywhere near him right now.

Hannibal just gave Will an indulgent smile and went below deck.

Before Bev went below deck Will grabbed her arm and told her to stay with Striker, lock her door and keep her gun handy. Despite the fact Hannibal seemed resigned to his fate, Will still didn't trust that Hannibal wasn't going to try to kill them all and pilot the boat to parts unknown. Will kept his gun in his waistband and tried to stay alert, which wasn't easy considering how relaxed he was currently feeling. *It must be due to the morphine*, he thought. *There's no way he was feeling this relaxed due to the incident below deck with Hannibal. Definitely not*. After he told himself this several more times he was almost convinced.

* * *

About 10 hours later they spotted Coast Guard boats approaching them and stopped their engine and all four stood on deck with their hands in the air. It was a tense 15 minutes before the Coast Guard believed they were Americans and not hostiles.

Hannibal was handcuffed and taken into custody and Will, Bev and Striker were taken to the Coast Guard base where Jack Crawford was contacted and told that his two agents were alive

and well and where they were. Striker's captain was called as well. Jack flew down that same day and gathered up all three of them and Hannibal Lecter and flew them back to Quantico. Jack was debriefed on the plane ride home.

The news shit storm that followed the survivors' return made last year's media frenzy pale in comparison. Not only had three of the same participants survived yet another Hunt, but Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter had been caught as well. To make matters worse, Jack did not want any mention of the Cubans to leak out due to the fact that relations between the U.S. and Cuba were just starting to thaw and something like this could derail what the President was trying to accomplish, so Will, Bev and Striker were ordered not to make any mention of the Cubans. Of course this made speaking to the media tricky. All three ended up either being vague or avoiding the press like the plague, which only made the media more certain there was a juicy story being covered up. The three of them were followed and hounded constantly.

Freddie Lounds from *Tattlecrime.com* resorted to making up a story. She theorized that the Hunt was actually an FBI conspiracy put in place to lure killers to an island to then be killed themselves. Since so many of the hunters had been killed in the last two Hunts, plus the fact that both FBI agents entered in the Hunt had survived not once but twice, Freddie's story actually sounded feasible and a lot of people were buying into her version of events.

Will received a two week leave after his debriefing and he told Jack that he was going to leave town in order to avoid the press. His real reason was much different. He had seen a logo on one of the small planes as it had passed by them going to the island which he knew he had seen before. It had nagged him where he had seen it before until onet night as he was taking a shower and thinking about something else, as so often happens, it just suddenly popped into his mind. When he lived in Biloxi he had seen planes with that logo, something with a small flying goose on the tail piece. The others probably couldn't even distinguish the small goose. When Will googled "goose" + "airline" he found the logo. It was *The Golden Goose Airline* whose logo was a goose flying in front of the sun. It was a small private airline that only serviced a few southern states, including Florida. He now had a starting point to look for management. Ten days later the trail led him to a very wealthy man surprisingly close to home on the outskirts of Baltimore.

* * *

Mason Verger was in his barn watching his latest batch of pigs, a big, aggressive strain he had imported from Sardinia, while listening to *Farhat Allika* by the Ben Souda Group playing loudly in the background. The music was loud and energetic and a bit chaotic, kind of like Mason himself. He had just thrown the carcass of a dead pig into the pen and was gleefully watching the pigs fight over it. Oh, these were the best strain of pigs he had come across yet. He couldn't wait to try them out on something a bit more human. He was threatening to feed his sister to the pigs every day just to keep her respectful of him. All of a sudden the music cut out.

"Cordell," he called out annoyed, "is that you?"

"No," came a stranger's voice, and when Mason turned around he was stunned to find Will Graham standing there looking at him. Oh, this couldn't be good. Had the FBI found him?

He looked behind Will but he seemed to be alone.

“Mr. Graham,” he said cautiously, to what do I owe the honor of a visit by the FBI?”

“So, you know who I am,” said Will.

“Of course. You have been in the news quite a bit as of late. I was happy to see you survived yet another one of those horrible Hunts.”

“Were you really” Will stated, not asking it as a question.

“Of course I was.” Mason was wondering where Cordell had gotten to. He might need him to take care of this situation. “So, what brings you here, Mr. Graham?”

“I think you already know the answer to that, Mr. Verger. Oh, you certainly covered your tracks well enough, but you did leave one small clue, no doubt believing we would all be dead, and I followed that clue and backtracked it to you.”

“I haven’t the foggiest notion what you’re talking about,” stated Mason. Mason figured Will didn’t have definitive proof or he would be arresting him right now, so best to deny everything, and maybe throw in the threat of a lawsuit for slander while he’s at it.

“The Hunt. It was you all along. Oh, it was brilliantly conceived and executed, I have to admit, but now the jig is up and I need you to answer one question for me before we move things along here. You had cameras placed all over the island, so I assume you taped everything so that you could enjoy it at your leisure. With so many cameras you would miss things otherwise. So my question is, where are the recordings?

“Mr. Graham, I believe this last Hunt has unhinged you, made you paranoid and delusional. I have no idea what you’re talking about and I must ask you to leave. Perhaps you’d like me to call your superiors so they can come out here and get you.”

“Would you like to call my superiors? Would you like me to tell them what I found out?”

So, Mason thought, *Mr. Graham hadn’t shared what he knew with anyone yet. There was still a way to salvage this situation if Mr. Graham just disappeared.*

“We can do this the easy way or the hard way, Mr. Verger,” Will said in a soft, steady tone while moving closer to Mason.

“Cordell! Where is that man?”

“Oh, I ran into him earlier. He tried to stop me from seeing you but I made him see reason. Now, where are the recordings?”

“What are you going to do to me if I don’t tell you?” sneered Mason.

Will cocked his head and smiled. He had already synced with a killer stored in his brain that would be perfect for this particular job. Mr. Verger had been terribly rude after all.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

> I apologize for not posting any chapters the last few days but when I got to the last two chapters of my story I realized the ending wasn't strong enough and I needed to come up with a new ending and rewrite it. I banged my head against a wall for two days before one finally came to me. This new ending is going to lengthen the story by a couple more chapters, and I also threw in another curve ball to make it interesting. I hope you enjoy. The next chapter will be posted tomorrow night. Thanks for sticking with me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jack Crawford was asked to investigate a strange accident that had occurred at Muskrat Farm that had left one man dead and another disfigured and paralyzed. It was one of the strangest tales Jack had ever heard, made stranger by the fact that it had happened to one of the wealthiest men in the country.

After being led into Mason Verger's room by his sister, Jack sat next to his bed trying not to wince at the damage to the man's face. According to preliminary reports, Mason had slipped and fallen into a pig pen that housed a highly aggressive strain of pigs that Mason had had imported recently, and when the pigs attacked him, his bodyguard had jumped in to try and save him but had been killed by the pigs instead. Mason had broken his neck in the fall and was being helplessly savaged by the pigs when his sister found him.

Mason stuck to the story. The whole thing sounded fishy to Jack, but what reason did he have to lie about it? Jack took his statement and left.

Margot Verger walked Jack Crawford out. She had a spring in her step these days. She was finally free of her abusive brother's control and could begin to live her own life now the way she wanted to. She didn't know exactly what happened to her brother since she knew for a fact she had not rescued him from the pigs, but whatever or whoever was responsible for Mason's current condition, she thanked God for them every night in her prayers.

* * *

The FBI had been scanning all airwave frequencies for two months straight looking for any chatter about the Cuban military unit from the Hunt, and although they had picked up chatter about a military unit going missing, the Cubans had no proof of what happened, only speculation. The capitán's superiors had been made to believe that the capitán and his crew had gone out to investigate drug activity on an outlying island and initially thought that they had possibly been ambushed, but after the unit had been missing a while people started coming forward and telling tales of Capitán Juarez. It didn't paint a pretty picture of the

man. The military found out about his drug connections and suspected that he and his men had been assassinated by a rival drug cartel. They stopped their investigation after that.

* * *

Hannibal Lecter was put on trial for his crimes and found guilty by reason of insanity. Although he appeared perfectly sane to anyone who looked at him, his lawyer made the defense that no sane man would murder people and then eat their organs and host dinner parties and feed those organs to their guests. The jury had to agree that this was not sane behavior, so Hannibal was found guilty by reason of insanity and sentenced to the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane to live out his life, or until Dr. Chilton deemed him sane and rehabilitated.

Hannibal started sending notes to Will every few weeks just to make sure he was always fresh in his mind. They didn't say much context-wise. What they were meant to say was, "Hey, remember me? Remember what we did the last time I saw you?" One of the notes, however, simply contained a newspaper article regarding Mason Verger's strange accident. On it Hannibal had simply drawn a smiley face. He knew Will would understand what that meant.

* * *

Will quit the FBI two months after returning from the Hunt. He had become aware that every time he entered a killer's mind he lost a piece of himself, but it was actually watching the Hunt footage that decided it for him. As he watched himself kill he didn't even recognize himself. The expression on his own face was … exalted. He had to ask himself at that point what was the difference between him and someone like Hannibal Lecter? Hannibal enjoyed killing too. No, Will had to quit the FBI before he lost himself entirely. So he gave his notice and found that Jack wasn't as upset as he thought he'd be. It seemed that Jack had found another wunderkind in a batch of new recruits, a girl named Clarice Starling. Will hoped that she came with less baggage than he had.

So Will decided to go back to something he enjoyed, working on boat motors, and he packed up his possessions and his dogs and moved back to Biloxi, Mississippi and bought a house attached to a small boat repair shop right on the beach. There he spends his days working on boat engines and not in the heads of killers. He also bought a boat and sometimes chartered it to take fishermen out for a day of fishing. Will knows all the best fishing spots. He was finally mostly at peace.

There were only two things breaking that peace. One was the notes he kept receiving from Hannibal Lecter, and the other was the dreams he continued to have even after all this time, although the jungle dream now alternated with a dream of him on a boat draped across a desk.

The notes had started about a month after the Hunt. The notes were always short, nothing telling, just something to constantly remind Will of Hannibal. Even after Will moved the notes kept coming every few weeks. He had no idea how Hannibal had even known that he moved, much less where he had moved to. He had had a small jolt of fear when he received the newspaper article regarding Mason Verger, but Hannibal's smiley face was clearly a

message that only Will had understood. Will shook his head as he wondered how Hannibal had made that connection, but then Hannibal was a brilliant man. Once Will figured out Hannibal wasn't putting anything in the notes that Chilton could read into (since Will knew Chilton would read anything Hannibal sent out) he stopped opening the notes and just threw them in a draw unopened. If only he could get rid of the dreams as easily.

* * *

Right after the Hunt Striker applied for and was accepted into the FBI Academy thanks to Bev's prompting and recommendation, plus the fact that he was able to survive two Hunts. He moved to Virginia where he breezed through an accelerated FBI training course due in part to his military and police training, and was officially an agent now. After becoming an agent Bev took him home to meet her family. Striker turned on the charm and not only survived meeting Bev's father, mother, and six brothers, but Bev's mother whispered to her, "This one's a keeper" as they were leaving. Striker proposed shortly thereafter and Bev accepted.

In April Will received a call from the two of them on speakerphone announcing they were getting married Saturday, June 1st—ironically two years to the day after they first spotted each other at the first Hunt—and wanted Will to be a groomsman at the wedding. They said after facing life and death together twice and surviving, they needed him there to continue to bring them luck. Will wanted to decline even though he liked both of them very much and was extremely happy for them, but Bev begged and begged until he finally said he'd do it. He went online and went ahead and bought a roundtrip airline ticket with an arrival time of noon on Friday, May 31st.

* * *

April 15th

Hannibal had earned certain privileges for good behavior. He's allowed books to read, paper and pencils to do his sketches, and he's allowed an iPad now with limited access. He's blocked from sending and receiving emails, Skype, and things like that, but he is allowed search privileges so he can read and conduct research for the journal articles he writes, which helps to keep his mind active and keeps him from getting too bored. These privileges are predicated on his good behavior and cooperating with Frederick Chilton whenever he wants to fumble around in his head. He also knows that when Frederick takes the iPad back every evening for recharging that he checks the search history to see what Hannibal's been looking at. Frederick should realize that someone as smart as Hannibal would know how to completely delete the specific searches he does not want anyone to see.

Hannibal was scanning the local newspaper on his iPad when he saw Ms. Katz and Mr. Manoso's picture above a short engagement announcement. He saw that the wedding date was set for June 1st. June 1st. He smiles as he makes the connection. He's happy for them though, he truly is. They both showed their strength during that second Hunt when they were traveling with Will and himself. Any children those two have will be forces to be reckoned with. When he is next allowed a phone call, he calls his solicitor and asks him to order a set

of Lion Sabatier Provençao kitchen knives from Europe as a wedding gift for them. He wonders if Will will be attending the wedding.

* * *

Meanwhile over at Muskrat Farms Mason Verger was reading the same engagement announcement, but his reaction was much different than Hannibal's. Here were two of the three people that should have died on that island not once but twice. He was fuming. He had had so much fun with his Hunt until these two and that psychotic Will Graham were entered, and then everything had gone to hell. Now look at him, a mere shell of his former self with Cordell gone and not even the Hunt to amuse him anymore. He wondered if Will Graham would be attending the wedding. Hmm, that actually gave him an idea. He would find that out, and if Will Graham was attending, Mason might yet find a way to have a little fun and exact his revenge. Mason had voice command on his cell phone and he said the name of a private detective who could be counted on to be discrete. The detective would be able to tell him if Mr. Graham was coming to the wedding or not, and if he was then Mason had plans to set into motion. If Mason had lips he would have smiled for the first time in months.

* * *

May 1st

Hannibal was sitting at the table in his cell perusing *Tattlecrime.com*, which was pretty boring as of late. The murder rate was actually down due in part to the number of killers eliminated at the last two Hunts which had the effect of making the news a lot less interesting. It looked like Freddie Lounds was back to making up stories to spice things up. Out of habit Hannibal went to the "Personals" section as he would have normally done on May 1st to look for the Hunt notice. He didn't expect to see anything but freezes when he sees, *"I'm Hunting for that Special Someone Who Can Get the Job Done."* It can't be. He knows that the island has been compromised, and he also knows what Will has done to Mason. Mason couldn't possibly be holding the Hunt this year. Hannibal takes one of his sketch pencils and begins to decode the message. The message is a website address per usual, but when he types the address in the search bar and hits enter, his eyebrows shoot up in surprise at what he sees. Well, he certainly hadn't expected that. He deletes that particular search from the browsing history and sits there and thinks about the information that has just fallen into his lap. Now, what to do about it. After a few minutes he yells out for his guard, Barney, and tells him he needs to see Frederick Chilton right away.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to Sudenkaataja for your words of encouragement. They really helped.

And thank you Black_Lotus for the back-to-back kudos for both my stories.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack Crawford arrived at the Baltimore State Hospital the following day after receiving a call from Dr. Chilton stating that Hannibal Lecter was asking to speak to him regarding an urgent matter. Jack was just as surprised as Dr. Chilton was because this was the first time that Hannibal had asked to see anyone other than his solicitor since his incarceration. As far as Jack could tell the only person he'd attempted any communication with was Will Graham. Jack had heard that Hannibal regularly sends out notes that Will never responds to. Jack had sent a few of his more seasoned agents over to try and interview Hannibal and they had all been met with silence and/or contempt.

As Jack moves to stand in front of the clear acrylic front of Hannibal's cell he looks at the beautiful, precise drawings on the walls. Most of them are of cities and places that Jack is unfamiliar with, but several are of Will Graham. Jack frowns. A couple of the pictures actually make Will look … predatory. Hannibal did seem to have a fixation on Will.

"Hello, Jack."

"Hello, Dr. Lecter. You asked to see me?"

"I did. Thank you for coming so quickly. I don't wish to waste your time so let me get right to it. What if I told you that I have information regarding a future assassination attempt on two of your agents?"

That got Jack's attention. "I would be very interested to hear what your source is and what you've heard," Jack replied cautiously.

"I assure you my source is solid, but I will only give this information to Will Graham, and it must be in person," Hannibal stated, "not over the phone."

"You know that Will doesn't even live in this state any longer, Dr. Lecter. Why can't you just give the information to me?"

"Because I want a favor in return, one that Will Graham must agree to. If Will is coming up for Ms. Katz and Mr. Manoso's wedding and sees me the day before the wedding, that should still be enough time to avert a possible disaster."

The mention of Bev and Striker's wedding in the same conversation as an assassination attempt makes Jack suddenly tense. He once again looks at the pictures of Will that Hannibal has drawn. "Are you sure this isn't just an attempt to see Will Graham? I mean you do seem to have a certain interest in him," Jack says pointedly looking around at the drawings of Will. "I've heard you send him correspondence regularly."

“I assure you, Jack, my information is real and if you don’t take it seriously you will be looking for two new agents in the not too distant future. Think about it Jack, but I wouldn’t think about it too long.”

“All right, Dr. Lecter, I’ll see what I can do.”

Jack went back to his office and thought about what Dr. Lecter had said. If this was some sort of hoax he couldn’t figure out what Dr. Lecter’s end game might be other than he would get to see Will for a minute. However, he certainly couldn’t risk that his information on a possible assassination attempt was not real. He picked up the phone and called Will Graham.

“Hello?”

“Will, hi, it’s Jack. It’s been a while.”

(Silence)

“Look, Will, I hate bothering you at home but a situation has come up. Hannibal Lecter asked to see me today and told me he has learned of an upcoming assassination attempt on two of my agents. He said he’ll only give the details of the assassination attempt to you in person.”

Will closed his eyes. He was never going to be free of Hannibal Lecter. “Jack, I’m not even with the Bureau any longer. Why does he want to give this information to me?”

“He said he wants a favor in return for this information, a favor he wants specifically from you.”

This had Will frowning. What could Hannibal possibly want from him?

“Look, Will, I know this is asking a lot of you, but Hannibal said if you see him the day before Bev and Striker’s wedding that this assassination attempt can still be averted. Bev told me you’re coming to the wedding.”

Will started at that and got a sudden chill. This supposed assassination attempt being mentioned in the same sentence as Bev and Striker’s wedding was making him uncomfortable. And Hannibal had mentioned “two agents.” Striker was an agent now. Coincidence? Shit. “Do you think this is legit, Jack, or do you think this is some game he’s playing?”

Jack thought about this a few seconds. “I think that somehow Dr. Lecter has gotten his hands on some legitimate information. I don’t know how, but I’m hoping he’ll tell you that.”

Will sighed. “Okay, Jack, my flight arrives at noon the day before the wedding. After I land I’ll go straight to the hospital and see what he has to say. He’d better not be jerking us around,” Will said unhappily.

* * *

Friday, May 31st

Jack met Will at the airport and drove him directly to the Baltimore State Hospital. From there Will was led to the lower levels where Hannibal and the more dangerous patients were kept. Hannibal had asked to speak to Will face to face without the glass between them, so when Will arrived he was taken to Hannibal's cell where Will finds Hannibal straightjacketed and chained to the wall. He also has a mask over his face.

Will frowned as he took in the mask. "Hello, Hannibal. The mask seems a little extreme. We're just two old friends having a conversation after all."

"Hello, Will. You're looking well." Hannibal took in Will's tanned skin and the auburn highlights he now has in his hair from the sun. He also notices changes to his body: larger biceps, flatter stomach. He was more beautiful than ever. "Dr. Chilton and Agent Crawford seem to think I'm playing some sort of game here."

"I certainly hope that's not the case," Will said looking up into Hannibal's eyes briefly.

"I assure you, Will, this is very real. I have found out about a contract offered for a hit on three specific people."

"Three? I thought you told Jack two?" Will said suspiciously.

"I told him two of his agents. The third person is not one of his agents," Hannibal said pointedly looking at Will.

Will looked uncertain and said, "Are the two agents Bev and Striker? I mean the timing of this conversation with their wedding being tomorrow … please tell me this doesn't concern them."

"As I told Jack, I'll tell you everything I learned, but first you have to agree to a favor."

"If it's within my power I'll do what I can. I don't think I'll have much sway with Dr. Chilton or Jack now that I'm no longer with the Bureau."

"This is a request of a more personal nature, Will. Since I know Jack and Frederick are listening in, will you come closer please?"

Will went over and put his ear to where he could see Hannibal's mouth moving behind the mask and listened as Hannibal's whispered his request.

Will studied Hannibal for a few seconds. "Seriously, that's what you want in exchange for this information?"

"That's it," Hannibal said. "Of course you don't have to make good on the favor until after you see that my information is legitimate. Do you agree?"

Will looked thoughtfully at Hannibal as if trying to figure out if there was a catch. "Well, you know I'll have to clear it with Jack and Dr. Chilton first before I can agree to it."

“Absolutely. Perhaps you should do it now as time is wasting and lives are at stake.”

Will nodded and left, looking for Jack.

“So, what does he want?” Jack asks him.

“He wants 15 minutes alone in an interview room with me, complete privacy. No cameras, no microphones. He understands that he’ll have to be chained to the table and he’s okay with that.”

Jack looked surprised. “That’s all he wants?”

“Yeah, pretty much.” There was one other small thing, but Will wasn’t going to mention that.

“Do you think this is part of some sort of escape attempt?”

“No, I don’t think so. I mean, he’s willing to wait until we see if his information is good. And I’m going to be with him the whole time and I’m certainly not going to help him escape.”

“Hmm. Well, it seems a small price to pay if it ends up saving lives. You’re okay with it?”

“Yes.”

“Dr. Chilton, you’re okay with it?”

Dr. Chilton just shrugged his shoulders.

“Okay then. Go back and make the deal and see what he says. We’ll be listening in.”

Will walked back to Hannibal. “Okay, Hannibal, you have a deal. Now, what did you find out, and more importantly, how?”

“Well, Will, I’m sure you’ve wondered how management communicated with killers to provide them with the details of upcoming Hunts.” Hannibal looked at Will pointedly.

Will started at the mention of management. Only he and Hannibal knew management was actually Mason Verger. Hannibal certainly had his attention now.

“Management would post an ad in a certain paper on a certain day with a certain key word in the title. That ad would contain a coded message that when decoded would provide an address to a website with details of the Hunt. Imagine my surprise when I checked for the ad recently just out of curiosity and saw an ad on the specified day with that key word in the title. However, when I decoded the message and went to the website what I found wasn’t details to this year’s Hunt, but an offered contract on a “hit” for you, Ms. Katz and Mr. Manoso to be done at the wedding tomorrow. It’s a brilliant way to advertise really because management knows that only killers look for this particular ad. When I was allowed phone privileges I tried calling the number listed on the website and it was disconnected. That tells me they’ve already contracted their hitman.”

“Someone would have to be crazy to try a hit in the middle of all of Bev and Striker’s FBI and police friends.”

“The offer of ten million dollars can make people take a few more risks than they normally would.”

“Ten million dollars?" Will said aghast.

“For that kind of money believe me when I say there will be someone willing to risk an attempt on your lives tomorrow.”

Will was furious. Why hadn’t he killed Mason Verger? Why had he let him live? Even if he went after him now it wouldn’t make any difference because hitmen are like smoke. Mason wouldn’t have any notion of how to get a hold of them or how they were planning to attempt the hit. Shit!

Hannibal seemed to read his expression. “It’ll be all right, Will. Now that you know about it you’ll be ready. And, Will, don’t be afraid to use your gifts to seek out the killer,” Hannibal added.

Will looked unhappy but nodded. “Thank you, Hannibal. I’m not exactly sure why you warned us, but thank you.”

“Don’t you, Will?”’ Hannibal said softly.

Will just looked at him a few more seconds, said “thank you” again and left.

Jack had heard the whole thing and was already on the phone. “We have to go tell Bev and Striker right away. They should cancel the wedding.”

“If they cancel the wedding the killer will still be out there trying to collect on their fee however they can. With ten million dollars on the line they aren’t going to stop simply because the wedding is called off. The hitman may decide to kill Bev and Striker on their honeymoon, or shoot them through the window of their home, or blow up their car with them in it, or sneak into their house during the night and shoot them in their bed. None of the three of us will ever be able to relax. We’ll constantly be looking over our shoulder. If we can catch whoever it is now, at least we’ll be able to relax.”

“Well let’s talk to Bev and Striker first. It’s their lives on the line as well as yours,” Jack said.

* * *

Bev and Striker were naturally upset and frightened, and Striker let loose a string of expletives that would have made a sailor blush, but they both ended up agreeing with Will that unless the killer was caught they would be living their lives in constant fear. After talking it over they decided to go ahead with the wedding as if nothing was wrong, but this put a big damper on what was supposed to be one of the happiest days of their lives.

Jack gathered all the agents that were already attending the wedding, as well as Striker's Brooklyn cop friends who were acting as groomsmen, for an emergency meeting. The key was to be armed, be ready, but not to tip the killer off that they knew anything.

Bev and Striker went ahead and had their rehearsal dinner so that if the killer was watching, everything would appear normal. At one point Bev got Will by himself and said, "So, Hannibal Lecter actually told you about this?"

Will nodded. "He found out about it the same way he found out about the Hunt every year, only this year instead of advertising for the Hunt it was an advertisement for a killer to do a hit."

Bev sighed. "I never would have thought Hannibal Lecter would do something so … human. Not only that, he sent us a set of kitchen knives as a wedding gift. I wasn't familiar with the brand so I googled it and about had a heart attack. This particular brand of knives costs a small fortune."

Will smiled. "Kitchen knives, huh? Sounds like him." More somberly Will said, "Sorry this is ruining your special day, Bev."

"I just don't want anyone to get hurt, Will. I mean, our families and all of our friends will be there. I hope we're making the right decision going ahead with this. If anything happens to anyone I won't be able to live with the guilt."

"All agents and Striker's cop friends will be looking for suspicious activity and will be armed. I'll be near you guys watching your backs the whole time. You and Striker will tell us if there's anyone there that you don't know."

"Watch your own back as well, Will. They're out to get you too."

"I know. But there's no one waiting for me back home if I don't make it but my pack of dogs. If something happens to me please make arrangements for them. I have a neighbor watching them this weekend."

"Oh, Will." Bev's eyes were tearing up and she suddenly hugged him. "We made it through two Hunts; we can make it through this." Then she left him and went to Striker, and Will watched as Striker put his arms around her and hugged her. Their love was so honest and open. He really envied them. He would die before he'd let anyone hurt either one of them.

Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow night for Bev and Striker's wedding. Will they get their happily ever after or will it end in disaster?

A special shout-out to fandorica and theStarfly (great names both of you) for leaving back-to-back kudos on both Hunt and Hunt-2. Thanks guys.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

June 1st – The Day of the Wedding

The wedding was set for 3:00 in the afternoon. The wedding and reception were both being held in the same large, beautiful ballroom. Jack and the other FBI guests arrived three hours early and searched the ballroom, the kitchen where the food would be prepared, and the restrooms from top to bottom. They had no idea what type of weapon would be used to attempt to kill Will, Bev and Striker. Perhaps the hitman had planted a bomb under the platform where the wedding party would be standing when the couple took their vows, who knew? Jack Crawford was not taking any chances. So after a thorough search came up with nothing, at 2:15 the ballroom doors were opened allowing the guests to start trickling in. Bev and Striker were told to immediately notify one of the other agents if they saw anyone they didn't recognize, but this was hard considering Striker had invited tons of his old Brooklyn cop buddies and various cousins and other family members that Bev had never met before, and Striker hadn't met a lot of Bev's distant relatives and old school buddies. Everyone was tense.

Will was standing off to the side watching people as they came in looking for any suspicious behavior, anything that set off an alarm in his brain. He was already suited up in his black tux with lavender tie and cummerbund. Bev and Striker had invited 230 guests, so the sheer number was overwhelming. Will tried opening himself up but had to shut his mind off as he immediately started getting a headache from being bombarded with so many minds.

Will looked around and spotted Jack and the other FBI agents situated around the room. They were trying to act casual as they too looked for anything suspicious. Then Will saw one of the groomsmen, who was also an FBI agent, come up to Jack and whisper in his ear. Jack looked over at Will and signaled him over.

"What is it?" Will asked. "Anything wrong?"

"Quite the contrary," Jack replied. "We got him."

"You got him? Really?" Will said excitedly looking between Jack and the agent.

The agent said, "Yeah, one of the cooks in the kitchen noticed a server acting suspicious around the wine and champagne. Since he didn't recognize the guy he came and got one of us, knowing there were cops and FBI present, and the guy was caught red handed with a syringe in his hand. The syringe was full of a rare poison called thallium that comes in a liquid form and is colorless, odorless and tasteless. He was injecting it through the corks of the champagne bottles. During the first toast everyone drinking the champagne would have dropped dead."

Will closed his eyes as relief washed over him. "Have you told Bev and Striker yet?"

“Just about to,” Jack replied.

“I’ll come with,” Will said.

Striker was ecstatic and wanted to go with them to tell Bev, but then he remembered it was bad luck to see her before the wedding. Still, he was beaming from ear to ear.

When Jack and Will went to the room where Bev was getting ready and told her the news, she burst into tears and ruined her makeup. “I was so scared someone might get hurt,” she sobbed through her tears. “What if it was one of my brothers or my parents…or Strikers family? This is the best present you could have given me,” she said smiling through her now tear streaked face. Then she kissed them both. In Will’s ear she whispered, “See, I knew you would bring us luck,” before she shooed them out so her makeup could be repaired.

The ballroom was set up beautifully. Folding chairs with material draped over them were set up on two sides of an aisle with a white paper runner down the middle. The chairs would later be put away and the space would then be used as the dance floor. There was a slightly elevated platform up front where the wedding party would stand so that everyone would be able to see the bride and groom as they recited their vows, and then later on the band would occupy that space. There was a bar on one side of the room, and on the other side of the room there were two tables set up: one that held the four-tiered wedding cake that was beautifully displayed, and then another longer table that was full of wedding gifts. Round tables with fancy table settings were set up all around the room. You could tell that a wedding planner had had a hand in all this by all the special little touches around the room. However, Will was uncomfortably reminded of the ballroom he was in last year on this exact day. And the year before that. He was having a strange sense of déjà vu. It was fitting really: Here they were in a ballroom once again on June 1st, and management had once again made arrangements to have them hunted and killed. He breathed a grateful sigh. At least Bev and Striker could enjoy the wedding now without worrying.

Will was signaled that it was time, and he went to the back of the room and took the arm of the bridesmaid he had been partnered with. The music started and he and his partner followed the other groomsmen and their partners down the aisle. Striker was waiting at the end of the aisle with a look of happy anticipation on his face. Will couldn’t help smiling as well.

As Will neared the end of the aisle he started to feel an itch in the back of his brain. He tried to focus it but it was too vague at this point. He tried to imagine what could be causing it. As he separated from his partner and stood with the other groomsmen at the end of their line, the itch became stronger, unsettling him. The hitman was caught, why was he feeling suddenly on edge?

Will watched as the two children who were preceding the bride walked down the aisle. Both looked to be about five years old. The little girl was sprinkling flower pedals as she walked with theatrical flourish. The little boy on the other hand held the ring pillow with a solemn look on his face, like even at such a young age he realized the importance of his part in all this. Then the *Wedding March* started and Bev walked down the aisle holding onto her father’s arm. She looked stunning and Will looked over to see a look of love and pride on

Striker's face. Will didn't know much about wedding gowns but he liked what Bev had chosen. Her gown was plain, elegant, understated. It was made of some sort of satiny material that had a soft sheen that hugged her body till it got to her knees and then flared out slightly. There was no lace, no glittery things all over it like most women liked. It was sleeveless with a deep v-neck. It looked like she had a little sparkly belt that added just a small touch of glitz. She had her hair pulled up in an elegant style and one of those sheer veils over her face that also trailed out in a long train behind her. She carried a colorful bouquet with touches of lavender that matched her eye shadow, the bridesmaids' dresses, and the men's ties and cummerbunds. She also had a big smile on her face as her eyes found Striker.

Bev reached the end of the aisle and her father flipped over her veil and kissed her cheek and placed her hand in Striker's before going and sitting beside his wife who Will could see was already dabbing her eyes with a tissue. Due to their different backgrounds they were having a non-denominational wedding with an "officiant" and had written their own wedding vows. The officiant started the ceremony.

But Will was only half listening as he now had warning bells ringing softly in his head which meant that danger was near. He was tense and adrenaline was coursing through his system. They had caught the hitman, why was he feeling like this? He quickly scanned the crowd and saw nothing out of the ordinary. He casually scanned the first few rows of people on both sides of the aisle. He saw Bev's mother, her six brothers, both her grandparents. There were various other relatives, and there was that teenage boy he had spotted earlier on with the too-long hair and a lanky frame in a too large suit that probably belonged to his dad. There were various other relatives he had met briefly at the reception dinner. On Striker's side there were his parents, his sister and her husband and children, his cop friends from Brooklyn. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. He tried reaching out with his empathy but it was met with too many minds and he had to close it off, yet when he had opened his empathy, even that briefly, the warning bells were ringing louder now. There was definitely danger here and it was close. He looked around for Jack trying not to look panicked. He needed to pinpoint the source of the danger. So much could go wrong right now. So many people could get hurt if he made the wrong decision and tipped off what he now realized must be a second hitman in the crowd. His heart was beating frantically. He had promised Bev he would watch her back. He couldn't let her or Striker down. That itch in his brain was trying to tell him there was something he was missing, some clue that was there that he was not seeing.

Will casually put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his glasses. He needed them right now to help conceal his eyes as they scanned the room. He spotted Jack about a third of the way down on Bev's side of the room, but there was no way he could signal him that danger was near. What was he missing? He still had that nagging feeling that he was missing a very important clue that would tell him who the hitman was. He tried to calm down and focus. Panicking wouldn't help right now. Jack had given him a gun and he still had it tucked into the back of his waistband; he hadn't had a chance to give it back to Jack yet.

In the background Will heard Striker reciting his vows. He tuned him out as his eyes moved, scanning, looking for whatever it was his gut was telling him he was missing. He needed to figure it out fast because since he, Bev and Striker were so close together, now would be the perfect time for the killer to strike. He once again scanned the audience, scanned over by the

bar, the tables that held the wedding cake and all the gifts that friends and family had brought. Wait, there was something wrong. His eyes scanned the gift table again. Something was different; something was missing. His gut was telling him he was close. Will heard Bev reciting her vows now.

Will had broken out in a sweat. Think, goddamnit, think. What was wrong with the gift table? Then it came to him. The teenage boy with the long hair and baggy suit had brought a present with a bright red bow that Will couldn't help but notice when he came in the room. Will thought it was funny because it looked more like a Christmas present than a wedding gift. That bright red bow would make that present stand out and be easy to find, and it was missing now. Will had watched the kid place it on the end of the table. He scanned the floor around the gift table just to be sure it wasn't there, but it was nowhere in sight. He brought his eyes over to the kid and his heart skipped a beat when he saw the kid was looking right at him. The kid had seen where he was looking. Will also saw what he had missed earlier, that this wasn't a kid at all, this was a man pretending to be a kid with his long hair hanging in his face and his baggy suit over his lanky frame. Those eyes that were now looking into his were cold and calculating. Time seemed to slow down into seconds …

One one-thousand, two one-thousand ...

Will saw the hitman start to rise from his seat and bring his hand up toward his chest. At the same time Will was reaching for his gun and closed his eyes and let the pendulum swing. Will was not a good shot. He had had to shoot Garrett Jacob-Hobbs nine times to kill him. But he had a killer who was a crack shot stored in his head that he had previously decided to access if he found himself needing to use his gun, and he accessed him now.

Three one-thousand, four one-thousand ...

The hitman was reaching into his suit jacket and Will saw the hand coming out holding the butt of a gun. That was the reason for the loose-fitting jacket, so he could conceal the weapon. The hitman probably suspected that with so many cops and FBI agents around that they might spot the weapon in his jacket if he moved the wrong way, so he had hidden it in his "present" with the bright red bow that made it easy to spot, and he probably retrieved the gun from the box right before the ceremony.

Will had cleared his gun from his waistband and was in the process of raising it. In the background he heard the officiant say "I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may now kiss the bride." Will wanted to scream out "GUN!" at this point knowing Striker, with his military and cop training, would pull Bev down to the ground, but what if Bev's relatives who were sitting right in front of the hitman stood up at that point in a panic and either caught Will's bullet or the killer's bullet. He only had one chance of this having any kind of acceptable resolution, and that was to shoot and kill the hitman before he had a chance to pull the trigger on his own weapon, and before any of the guests started to get up in panic.

Five one-thousand, six one-thousand ...

The hitman's gun had now cleared his jacket and, *Fuck!*, Will sees with a touch of panic that it's a Glock Model 18 fully automatic machine pistol. It's not much bigger than a standard firearm but shoots bullets one after the other like a machine gun. This pistol has a 33 round

magazine that holds high-capacity armor piercing bullets. Even if any of these guys are wearing Kevlar it won't matter. He doesn't even have to aim, just spray bullets into the wedding party for maximum damage. These bullets will mow them all down like Swiss cheese. Thirty-three rounds. *Shit!*

Will sees the hitman's eyes go wide as he sees the weapon now in Will's hand being raised toward him. Other people are seeing it as well. It would be mere seconds before the room erupted into total chaos. Will will only have one chance to aim his weapon precisely and kill him. If the hitman shoots first it's game over for all of them. Fortunately for Will the killer in his head right now is calm and his hand isn't shaking as it had been before.

Seven one-thousand, eight one-thousand ...

None of the guests were starting to stand yet, but Will can hear the volume in the ballroom starting to increase as people are seeing the gun in his hand being raised toward them. He also sees movement out of the corner of his eye as Striker and Bev realize something's wrong and are turning toward him. Will has his gun raised nearly to where he wants it, but the hitman has cleared his own gun from his jacket and is swinging the barrel their way.

Nine one-thousand, ten one-thousand ...

Will's gun is now where he wants it. He takes a breath, holds it, and pulls the trigger. The bullet hits the hitman right between the eyes and his head flies back from the impact, but his finger had been on the trigger and when the bullet hit him his last reflex before dying was to squeeze the trigger, releasing a short burst of bullets before falling down dead.

At this point, time speeds back up to normal. People are screaming and running in all directions. Will looks down at himself and surprisingly doesn't see any bullet holes in his own body, but when he looks over at Bev and Striker they are on the ground and Striker is on his knees shielding Bev with his body so Will can't see her face, but it's the crimson drops on her white wedding dress that has Will's heart in his throat.

Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow night after work for the final chapter of Hunt-2. See you then.

A special shout-out to bangtansonyeonndans for back-to-back kudos on Hunt and Hunt-2. Glad you could join us for the final chapters.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

And now for the final chapter of "The Hunt-2." I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Please no, Will thinks. *No-no-no*. Will runs over to Striker and grabs his shoulder and says in a panicked voice, “Is she okay?”

Bev blinks up at him and says, “What the hell just happened?”

Will had to close his eyes for a second and get his emotions under control before he could answer her. "There was a second hitman in the crowd, but he’s dead now. Are you hurt?” he asked, looking down at the blood on her dress.

“Bullet grazed her arm," Striker said, "but it’s not too serious.”

“Was anyone else hurt?" Bev asked worriedly as she sat up.

Will looked around then quickly. “No, no one else was hurt.” He couldn’t believe it.

Jack ran up at that point and said, “Everyone okay? Bev, you okay? You’re bleeding.”

When Bev looked down and saw the blood dripping down her arm onto her dress she said, “Son of a bitch! It took me three months to pick out this dress and we haven’t even had our pictures taken yet and now I have blood on my goddamn dress!”

“Whoa, settle down bridezilla,” Striker said tying his handkerchief around Bev’s arm. Imagine how much more interesting our wedding pictures are going to be than just regular old boring pictures. When our grandkids look through them some day and say, ‘Hey, granny, why is there blood on your dress?,’ what a badass story we’ll have to tell them.”

Will could tell Striker was badly shaken but he was keeping it together and trying to make Bev laugh.

Then Bev said, “OW! My arm suddenly hurts like a motherfucker.”

“Uh, I think someone’s picking up some bad habits from their new husband,” Jack said giving Striker a scorching look. “Let’s get you to the hospital so they can take a look at that. Also your families need some reassurance over there.

Bev’s family was being held back by the other agents until Jack saw what her condition was. Now they came flooding over to her in the biggest group hug Will had ever seen, every one

of them bawling their eyes out. Striker's family wasn't in much better shape.

Striker took Bev to the ER where she caused quite a stir in her wedding dress. She needed a few stitches, but she insisted on coming back and finishing the reception. She said she wasn't wasting all that money they paid out.

While Bev was at the hospital Jack had the crime scene photographed and the body removed. Hotel management had come in all upset at one point, what with a dead body in their ballroom and all, but Jack could be pretty persuasive when he wanted to be. Nobody was going to ruin the rest of Bev's evening if he could help it. Some of the people had already left to go home and have a stiff drink and tell their friends about the craziest wedding they'd ever attended, but most had stuck around. By the time Bev came back the band was set up. Then the drinking and dancing began. Of course the drinking was limited to soda and drinks from the bar since the wine and champagne had been potentially tampered with, but everyone still had a wonderful time. Striker's friends from Brooklyn weren't bothered in the least by the events that had happened. They said an unusual day in Brooklyn was when there wasn't a dead body lying around.

Bev danced the first dance with her new husband, then danced with her father, but the third dance she went and pulled Will onto the dance floor. It was a slow dance. "So, she said," swaying to the music, "we survived yet *another* Hunt. As I said before, I knew you were lucky, Will. Now you know why I insisted you be here. If you hadn't been here, who knows what would have happened."

"Well one good thing came out of the Hunt, it brought you and Striker together."

"It did that," she said smiling. "You know, Striker and I were talking at the hospital when I was getting stitched up, and if/when we have our first son we've decided we're going to name him William Carlos Manoso."

Will stared at Bev stunned. "You're naming your first son after me? Are you sure that's not the painkillers talking?"

"No," she laughed. "I can't think of a better name." Then as the song ended she hugged him tight and kissed him on the cheek, then went to join her new husband.

* * *

The Favor

The following day Will arrived at the BSHCI and was shown down to the interview room by Barney. Jack and Dr. Chilton were following him even though Will told them it wasn't necessary, that he would be fine. They both seemed more curious than worried. Will looked through the glass inset in the door and saw that Hannibal was already inside, his hands manacled with a three foot length of chain threaded through an iron ring bolted into the table. His feet were also manacled together with about a foot of chain. There were no cameras or listening devices in this room, and per Hannibal's previous request the door window would be covered so he and Will would have 15 minutes of undisturbed, unobserved time to themselves. Barney placed a piece of cardboard over the window and duct-taped it

into place and told Will if there was any trouble to scream loud and he would hear it. Will thanked Barney, and then all four of them checked their watches right before Will went inside.

Fifteen minutes. All right then. Will was dressed in a plain white v-neck t-shirt that showed off his tanned skin, and faded jeans that fit his body like a glove. He was freshly showered and wasn't wearing any cologne as he knew Hannibal didn't like his particular brand.

As the door shut behind him he looked at Hannibal and said, "Well, you really came through for us. The information you gave us saved a lot of lives. I want to thank you for that. Bev said she's going to send you some pictures from the wedding."

Hannibal nodded and then said, "What actually happened at the wedding, Will? The newspaper account was a bit vague."

Will leaned his hip against the table and crossed his arms. "Before the ceremony started one of the agents found a guy in the kitchen trying to poison the champagne. They took him into custody and we thought we had our hitman and we all let our guard down, but then when I was up front with the other groomsmen watching Bev come down the aisle—looking beautiful I might add—I got a feeling that there was danger nearby. There was a second hitman sitting right behind Bev's family with what was essentially a small machine gun tucked in his jacket ready to take out the entire wedding party, I guess. I figured it out at the last minute and killed him, but Bev still ended up getting a bullet graze on her arm from a stray bullet the hitman managed to fire off, and she got blood on her wedding dress." Will laughed. "You should have heard her go off about the dress. But fortunately no one else was hurt. Jack told me today that the hitman was identified and that he had been diagnosed with advanced cancer a few months back and didn't have long to live." *That's why he was so thin*, Will thought to himself. "Anyway, I guess he took the hit with the intention of going out in a blaze of glory."

"Did you use your empathy to kill him, or was that you?

"No, I'm not a good enough shot to risk something like that on me. I used an expert marksman I had in my head."

Hannibal nodded.

After a few seconds passed Will said, "This favor you're asking for, is it supposed to prove something to you or to me?"

"Possibly both. We may both learn something from it."

"Okay, so you want one kiss of my own free will while not empathizing with anyone. Alright, well it's definitely just me in my head right now."

Will wasn't going to admit it to Hannibal but he was actually curious about this himself. Since moving to Biloxi he had gone on two dates. Both times had been with beautiful, intelligent women who had been skilled at keeping the conversation going even when he was at a loss for words. One of them, Molly, had loved dogs and fishing and had a great sense of

humor. She should have been a perfect match for him. When he drove each of them home after their date they had both pressed their soft bodies into his for a goodnight kiss. Both times when that happened Will had had a flashback of rough lips kissing him and the scrape of a five o'clock shadow abrading his skin, strong hands pulling him close. Both women had asked him if he'd like to come in, and he had politely refused both. It was too unnerving kissing one person and having flashbacks of another. He had had to face the reality that it was possible that his time spent with Hannibal had changed his very nature on a deep level. However, it was also possible that by having empathized with Hannibal he was continuing to have "ghost feelings" as an aftereffect. This favor Hannibal was asking for would prove or disprove that. If he kissed Hannibal while he was not empathizing with him and it turned out that it was unpleasant, that it was nothing like in his dreams or the way he remembered it when empathizing with him, then maybe he would finally be able to break free from the dreams and the influence that Hannibal seemed to have over him. Will sighed. This kiss was going to be very telling for him. Either way he was going to find that out right now and then deal with the consequences of whatever the results turned out to be.

Will looked at the seating arrangement trying to figure out the best way to do this. Ideally they would have been standing face to face, but that wasn't possible. Hannibal would have to remain seated chained to the table as he was. Hannibal could lean his head back and Will could bend over him and kiss him that way, but that would be a bit awkward. Will had promised Hannibal a kiss for giving him life-saving information, and he was going to make sure it was a real, honest-to-god curl your toes kind of kiss. This had to be a real kiss if Will was going to be sure. Will sighed again. There was really only one good way to do this. Fuck it, he was going to go for it.

Hannibal was watching Will patiently, curiously. Hannibal had seen for himself when locked in a cage with Will in the second Hunt that Will had erotic dreams about him. That told Hannibal that Will had repressed feelings about him that were coming out in dreams that he was not allowing himself to feel during waking hours, or perhaps Will was simply explaining them away as being caused by having empathized with Hannibal. This kiss could be a real eye-opener for Will, at least that's what Hannibal was hoping for. He waited expectantly.

"I'm going to pull your chair back from the table a bit," Will said. "You've got enough chain for me to pull you back about a foot." So Will pulled Hannibal's chair back from the table which stretched the chains out to almost their maximum length. There was a bit of slack in the chain so the manacles wouldn't pull on Hannibal's wrists. Then Will sat on the side of the table and swung his legs toward Hannibal. He scooted forward, lifted his butt over the metal ring and put one leg on either side of Hannibal and lowered himself onto Hannibal's lap with his back pressed against the table. "I think when two people kiss it should be face to face like this, don't you?"

Hannibal just swallowed but didn't say anything. Will liked the fact that Hannibal's chained wrists really didn't allow Hannibal to touch him. All Hannibal could really do was squeeze Will's sides with his arms. It made Will feel empowered, bold. Plus, by sitting on Hannibal's lap he was in a position where he was taller than Hannibal, looking down at him.

Well, here goes nothing, Will thought, tilting his head and lowering his lips. Then he stopped an inch away from Hannibal's lips and said, "By the way, before I forget I wanted to ask you

how you knew about Mason Verger."

"Ah, that. When I read the article, although the details were a bit sketchy, I was struck with a sense of familiarity, like this was something I would have done to him myself. Then I took into account he had the money to pull something like the Hunt off. Did you use my mindset when you visited Mason?," Hannibal asked.

Will smiled sheepishly. "I did. I felt you were the best tool for this particular job. So you liked what I did?"

"I did, and I'm extremely flattered you chose me."

"I just wish now I'd killed him. I thought leaving him like that would be worse than death, leave him to suffer like he made so many others suffer. I knew he wouldn't go to the authorities, not with the things I could tell them. I guess it was foolish in hindsight not to expect some type of retribution."

Hannibal noticed that not only is Will embracing his empathy, but he wonders if Will even realizes how casually he speaks of killing now. This Will Graham is quite different from the Will Graham who shot Garret Jacob Hobbs and then collapsed on his kitchen floor trembling and hyperventilating. He had come so far. "Well, if you had killed him we wouldn't be together having this conversation right now, so I'm rather grateful that you did leave him alive."

"Ah, yes. Back to your favor," Will said. Will tilted his head and lowered his lips to Hannibal's, moistening his own lips right before they made contact. Will just skimmed Hannibal's lips lightly at first, teasingly. He brought his tongue out just a bit and ran it along the seam of Hannibal's lips, but Hannibal wasn't moving a muscle. Will smiled. He would change that; he loved a challenge. He parted his lips and started slow, altering pressure and suction, using a little bit of tongue. Hannibal finally started responding, parting his own lips and kissing back. Will pressed his body against Hannibal and deepened the kiss. Will heard the chains rattle and knew Hannibal wanted to hold him, touch him, but the taut chains kept him from doing anything other than just squeezing Will's sides with his arms. Will smiled. He liked having Hannibal helpless like this a lot. Will brought his hands behind Hannibal, one stroking his back, the other behind his neck, and deepened the kiss, getting his tongue more involved. He took the hand that was behind Hannibal's neck and ran his fingers through Hannibal's hair. It was as thick and silky as he had imagined. Then he knotted that hand in Hannibal's hair and tugged Hannibal's head to the side and deepened the kiss further. He heard Hannibal groan at this point.

Will could feel his own body responding and felt heat coursing through his veins. As hard as it was for him to admit, he was enjoying kissing Hannibal Lecter, very much so by that fact that his body was becoming aroused. Well, hell. It looks like he's at least physically attracted to Hannibal who just happens to be a killer, a cannibal, and a man. What was he supposed to do with that? At least he's no longer with the Bureau. Somehow that would have made it seem a lot worse.

Since Will now had to face facts that he had a physical attraction to Hannibal, he now took a second to consider the position he was currently in. He had Hannibal Lecter sitting beneath

him chained to a table pretty much at his mercy. Will smiled as an idea suddenly took shape. There was a debt that needed to be repaid, a debt that had included Will draped across a desk on a boat and at Hannibal's mercy. Well Will was in a perfect position to repay that debt in full with interest. This could be fun.

While still kissing Hannibal Will decided to try a little grind of his hips just see what happened. Hannibal clearly hadn't been expecting that and Will heard him gasp.

"Will, what are you doing?" Hannibal said with a slight warning in his voice.

"Nothing that you wouldn't do to me if our positions were reversed," Will replied. Will put his lips by Hannibal's ear and whispered, "Hannibal, do you remember back that last day of the Hunt when we were on the boat after you patched up my leg and what you did to me? How you had me at your mercy? Well I remember it vividly."

It was time to turn up the heat a bit more. "It's really warm in here. Are you warm?" Will asked.

Will drew his t-shirt over his head in one quick motion and tossed it aside. His body was tan from working outdoors, and his soft teachers body was now toned from working on boat motors. He watched as Hannibal noted the changes in his body. After giving Hannibal a few seconds to study his body Will grabbed the seam of Hannibal's jumpsuit in both hands and pulled it apart, unsnapping it from neck to groin in one quick motion. Hannibal looked slightly shocked, but Will just smiled at him. Hannibal had a t-shirt on, but Will rucked it up to his armpits. Will didn't need to look down to know there was now a tent in Hannibal's boxers. He could feel it. Will checked his watch. They still had eight minutes to go, lots of time to make this man squirm. Will put his hands on Hannibal's chest and felt the crisp chest hair. The sensation was strange.

Hannibal was watching Will touch him. It was like he was coming alive before him. All his actions were strong, confident, uninhibited. Gone was the shy, sheepish little Will replaced by this new bold Will, and Hannibal was loving it.

Will was back to kissing Hannibal while touching and kneading his chest. Will didn't have to limit his kissing to Hannibal's mouth, so he put his lips against his throat and he felt Hannibal tense slightly. *So, Hannibal's not sure if I'm going to kiss him or bite him.* Will smiled against Hannibal's throat and started kissing and brushing his lips up and down the side of Hannibal's throat. When he came to the carotid artery he licked it and then grazed his teeth over it. He felt Hannibal shiver and heard the chains rattling again. Will grazed his teeth along Hannibal's jaw. Hannibal was actually tilting his chin back. He was enjoying this. Will was grinding against him slowly and rubbing their bare chests together. Will kind of liked the feel of that hairy chest rubbing against his; it created a nice friction.

Hannibal buried his face in Will's neck and breathed in deeply. "I'm glad you're not wearing that awful aftershave, Will. Your natural scent is much more pleasant."

"I knew you didn't like it so I left it off." Will was surprised at how breathless he himself sounded now. He took Hannibal's earlobe in his mouth and sucked on it next, then ran his tongue around and in Hannibal's ear. Hannibal was definitely starting to squirm.

Hannibal was feeling unexpectedly frustrated. He couldn't touch Will, couldn't move all that much. He wanted to spread his legs further apart but couldn't even do that due to the 12 inches of chain between the manacles on his ankles. He wanted to touch Will so bad, do things to Will to complement the wonderful things Will was doing to him, but he was basically helpless, not a feeling he was used to. When he had asked for a kiss from Will he had wondered how Will would repay the favor. At one end of the spectrum Will might have given him a very platonic, very dry kiss on the lips and called it a day. At the other end of the spectrum Hannibal had thought there might be a deep, erotic kiss. But never had he envisioned this, and he was exceedingly pleased at how well his favor was working out. However, he had never been more frustrated in his life.

"Feeling a little frustrated?" Will asked, seeming to read his mind. Then he went back to ravaging Hannibal's mouth and grinding his hips against him harder. Will decided he'd throw in a little dirty talk and see how Hannibal responded to that. Will always loved it when girls talked dirty to him. Will put his mouth right by Hannibal's ear again and whispered, "Remember when you asked me if I had dreams about our near miss and I said no?"

"Yes," Hannibal said in a slightly breathless voice.

"Well I lied. I dream about you fucking me every night. You bend me over and you stretch me and push inside me so deep and you fuck me so hard and it feels so good, and when I come I come harder than I ever have in my life."

Hannibal groaned and Will could feel him growing even harder beneath him.

Then Will went back to kissing him hungrily on the mouth and moved one of his hands down between them to massage Hannibal's groin. Since they're so close together it had the added benefit of massaging Will's own groin at the same time. Hannibal moaned and threw his head back and the chains clinked loudly this time. Will threw his own head back and closed his eyes and let the sensation wash over him. When he opened his eyes Hannibal was staring at him. "You like watching me get off, Hannibal?"

"It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen, Will."

Will almost believes he sees real affection in Hannibal's eyes, but he knows from experience how manipulative Hannibal can be. Will smiled and moved his lips to the side of Hannibal's neck, kissing lower, moving lower. He slipped off Hannibal's lap between his knees kissing him all the way down.

* * *

Six minutes later Will is standing next to the table smiling as he puts his t-shirt back on. He looks at Hannibal who is looking wonderfully disheveled and flushed. Will goes over to Hannibal and pulls his t-shirt back down, snaps his jumpsuit back up, wipes the sweat off his face and finger combs his hair back into place. He then pushes his chair back up to the table where it was.

"Has the favor you asked for been fulfilled to your satisfaction," Will asks with a devilish gleam in his eyes.

“Beyond my wildest expectations,” Hannibal replies. “You’ve never failed to surprise and impress me, Will. That’s why I’ve always found you so remarkable. Did you happen to discover anything new about yourself during the last 15 minutes?”

“It did answer a question that I had been wondering about as of late,” Will answered honestly. Will hesitated a few seconds like he was choosing his next words carefully, then said, “Hannibal, if you should happen to find yourself outside the walls of this fine establishment anytime in the near future, you know where to find me. Maybe we can take this little favor to the next level. Maybe we can even pay Mason Verger a visit together. I would bow to your expertise in that regard.”

Then Barney interrupted whatever Hannibal was about to say by knocking on the door and saying time's up. Will went over to Hannibal and kissed him one more time.

Will knocked on the door to let Barney know he was ready and glanced back at Hannibal one final time and saw a look of promise in Hannibal’s eyes. Will just nodded and smiled. When he smiled he showed all his teeth. Hannibal’s breath caught. He would sketch that look as soon as he was back in his cell.

Will was still smiling as he exited the room. “Dr. Chilton, a pleasure as always. Jack, it was great seeing you again,” Will said shaking his hand. "If you’re ever in Biloxi come by and see me.” Then he turned and left with Barney hot on his heels. Dr. Chilton and Jack looked at Hannibal sitting rather boneless in his chair with a slight smile on his face, then at Will’s retreating form where they both noticed that Will seemed to have a new confident spring to his step. Then they looked at one another, both wearing identical shocked expressions on their faces.

“You don’t think Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter …” Dr. Chilton left the sentence unfinished.

“No.” Jack said. Then “No, no, I don’t think so.” But Jack really couldn’t be sure what was going on between Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter.

Jack had had several of his agents try and interview Hannibal over the last several months but Hannibal either hadn’t spoken to them, or had spoken to them with contempt. But somehow Will Graham had managed to make a connection with Hannibal, interest him, and hold his attention. If Will Graham could intrigue Hannibal, maybe he had another remarkably unique agent that he could dangle in front of Hannibal to catch his attention. Jack could certainly use Hannibal’s insights on some of the harder cases the FBI still had open. One serial killer that had just started out was proving vexing. The media was calling him Buffalo Bill. He had nothing to lose by sending Clarice Starling over to talk to Hannibal. Who knows, maybe Hannibal would find her as interesting as Will Graham.

* * *

The next day in Jack’s office …

“Good morning, Clarice.”

“Morning, Mr. Crawford.”

“We're interviewing all serial killers now in custody for a psycho-behavioral profile. Could be a real help in unsolved cases. Most of them have been happy to talk to us. Do you spook easily, Starling?”

“Not yet, sir.”

“See, the one we want most refuses to cooperate. I want you to go after him again today in the asylum.”

“Who's the subject?”

“The psychiatrist, Hannibal Lecter.”

“Hannibal the Cannibal.”

Ah, but that’s another story…

Chapter End Notes

Oh, come on. You guys didn't really think I'd kill Bev off after all we've been through together, did you? I mean, I wrote her a new husband and everything.

Thanks to everyone who read Hunt and Hunt-2 and accompanied me on this incredible journey. Never having written a story before, it's been an amazing experience. Thanks for all your comments and your kudos. It's a huge motivator. Remember, comments and kudos = love, so if you haven't left either yet, now's the time.

1-25-2017: I've just started posting chapters to "V", a vampire/apocalyptic/A/B/O story, so if you enjoyed this story, please check it out!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!